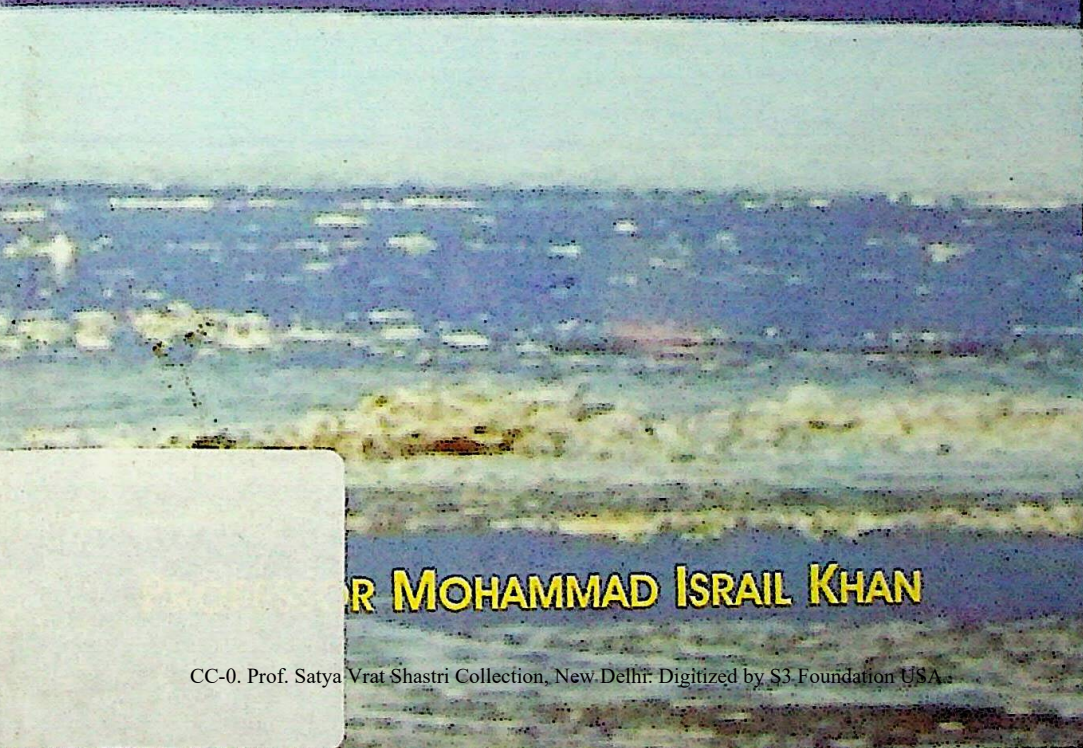


BRAHMĀ IN THE PURĀNAS



BY MOHAMMAD ISRAIL KHAN

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BRAHMĀ IN THE PURĀNAS

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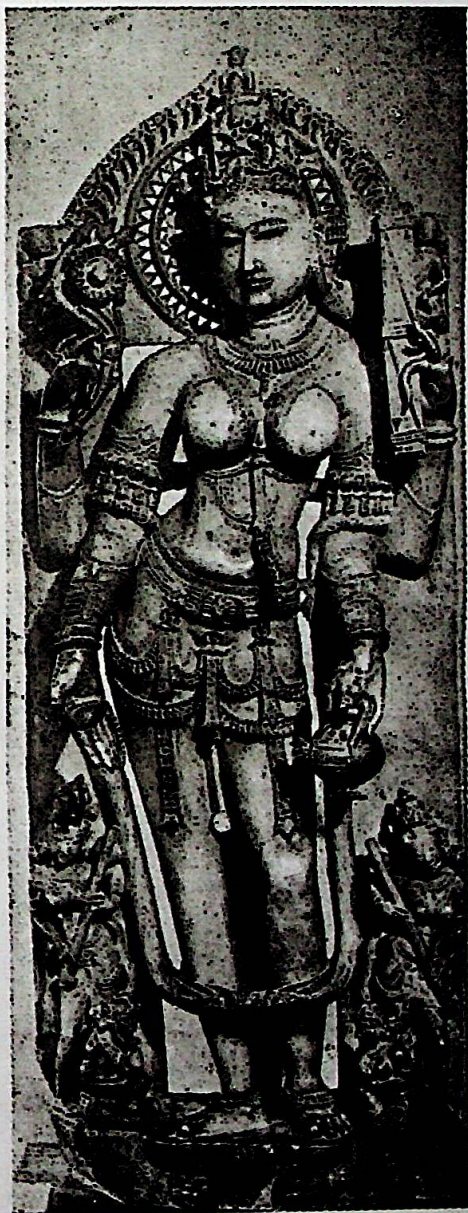
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Dedicated to
SARASVATI*
The Goddess of Learning, Fine Arts, Music, Eloquence, Vāk,
Śāstras, Sciences, Vidyās, etc.



SARASVATI IN SANSKRIT LITERATURE

✿ by Dr. Mohammad Israil Khan

BRAHMĀ IN THE PURĀNAS

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BRAHMA IN THE PURANAS

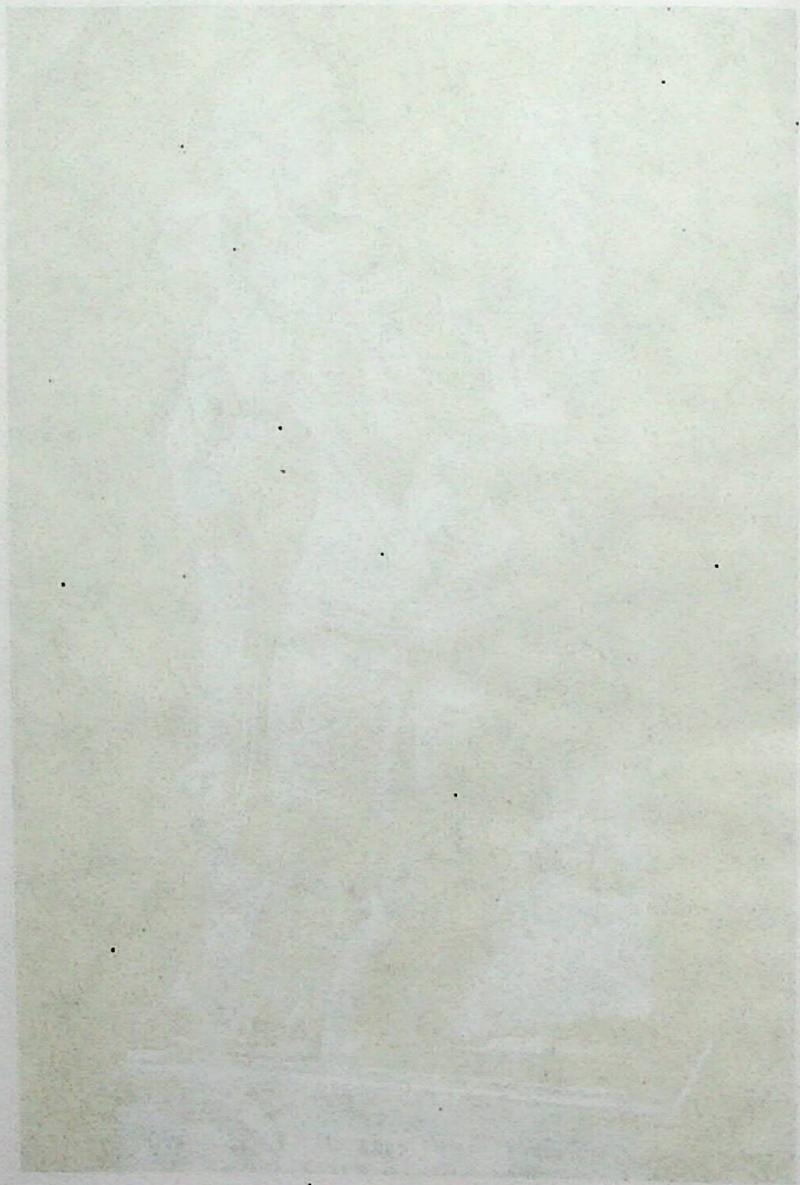
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Frontispiece



SARASVATI
Pāla, 10th Century A. D., 24 Paraganas, Bengal,
Asutosh Museum,
CALCUTTA

Frontispiece



BARANASI
100 G. S. D. 14
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ABBREVIATIONS

A	Abhidhānacintāmaṇi
ADS	Āpastambadharmasūtra
AIOC	All-India Oriental Conference
Ait Br	Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa
ApaPrc	Aparājitaṣṭacchā
AP	Agni-Purāṇa
AR	Asiatic Researches
AU	Aitareya-Upaniṣad
AV	Atharva-Veda
BdP	Brahmaṇḍa-Purāṇa
BhāP	Bhāgavata-Purāṇa
BhavP	Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa
BrP	Brahma-Purāṇa
BvP	Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa
Comm.	Commentary
DBhāP	Devī-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa
Dev Pra	Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa
f.n.	foot-note
GarP	Garuḍa-Purāṇa
HC	Harṣacarita
HVP	Harivaṃśa-Purāṇa
JOI	Journal of Oriental Institute
Kād	Kādambari
Kath	Kathopaniṣad
MāASc	Mānasāra on Architecture and Sculpture
MārP	Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa
MBhĀP	Mahābhārata-Ādiparvan
MBhŚP	Mahābhārata Śalyaparvan
MP	Matsya-Purāṇa
MS	Manusmṛti
NāṭŚ	Nāṭya-Śāstra
Niru	Nirukta
OST	Original Sanskrit Texts

PañBr	Pāñcaviṃśati-Brāhmaṇa
PdP	Padma-Purāṇa
PO	The Poona Orientalist
Pra	Prapañcasāra
RV	Ṛgveda
SādhMā	Sāadhanamālā
SāñK	Sāñkhya-Kārikā
ŚārT	Śāradātilaka-Tantra
ŚBr	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa
ŚilR	Śilparatna
SkP	Skanda-Purāṇa
ŚrividT	Śrīvidyārṇava-Tantra
TaittĀ	Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka
TaittBr	Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa
VaiR	Vaikṛti-Rahasya (Śrīdurgāsaptaśatī)
VāmP	Vāmana-Purāṇa
VDP	Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa
ViṣP	Viṣṇu-Purāṇa
VP	Vāyu-Purāṇa

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PREFACE

Brahmā is one of the most celebrated gods of the post-*Vedic* period. In the *Purāṇic* triad, he stands first. But in the *Vedic* age, he is not mentioned among the gods. There are a number of gods like Dhātā, Vidhātā, Viśvakarman, Brahmanaspati, Vācaspati, Prajāpati, Bṛhaspati, Brahman, etc., who collectively share the personality of post-*Vedic* Brahmā. There is a great singularity in the character of the *Rgvedic* deities. In the *Vedic* pantheon, many deities arose and later on, they merged into others, a few of them survived in stereotyped forms. But in regard to some, the case has been different; for with them, there has been a gradual process of change and development. Sarasvatī is a glaring example of it. But with the *Purāṇic* Brahmā, the case has been different. As a matter of fact, he emerged as a great *Purāṇic* god, suppressing the personality of many *Vedic* deities. But even after the merger, some deities kept their personality intact. Thus, there is a great singularity in the emersion and development of Brahmā.

In the past, scholars have written much on various deities; but no valuable work has been done on Brahmā except a few *stray articles* and '*The Cult of Brahmā*' by T. Bhattacharya. My book—'*Some Graphical Purāṇic Texts On Brahmā*' (Crescent Publishing House, F/D-56, New Kavinagar, Ghaziabad, U.P. India) throws a flood of light on the various aspects of the personality of Brahmā. Many reasons are assigned as to why Brahmā, being the foremost in the *Purāṇic* triad, could not gain popularity. For instance, he was so enamoured of the beauty of his daughter that he married her. This goes against the established law of the world. Secondly, he goes on creating things, which ultimately bring miseries to human beings. Brahmā is seen always granting boons either to gods or demons. He is not so generous to human beings. It is probably due to these reasons that he could not get popularity. As a result, he has not been an object of mass-worship and no temples, except a few, are dedicated to the god. Thus, Brahmā has been a neglected deity in the sense that there is a great paucity of literature on him due to

indolent view of scholars towards the god. My humble attempt accomplishes this task to some extent. I hope that others will follow suit.

The book—'*Brahmā in the Purāṇas*'—is divided into five chapters :

1. Brahmā in the Purāṇas
2. Birth of Brahmā
3. Offsprings of Brahmā
4. The Purāṇic Episode, Colour and Vehicle of Brahmā
5. The Image of Brahmā and His Spouse

Besides many valuable materials are included in the *APPENDIX*, so as to present a picturesque account of Brahmā.

In completing this book, I have taken a lot of help from various libraries i.e., M.M.H. College Library, Ghaziabad; L.R. College Library (Indology), Sahibabad; Delhi University Library and the Libraries of National Museum and Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi. I am thankful to the office—bearers of these libraries. I record my deep sense of gratitude to Dr. J.C. Rai, Principal, M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad; Dr. Shivaram Murti, Dr. M.C. Joshi, Dr. M.C. Bharatiya, Dr. C.L. Jha, *etc.*, for their encouragement and good wishes, which enabled me to accomplish this great task. My son, Mr Najam Absar, accorded me his great help in various ways in the completion of the book. At this moment, words fail to express my feelings of heart of hearts towards him. May he live long.

Dated 28-08-2006 28/8/2006

Mohammad Israil Kham

TRANSLITERATION TABLE

अ	a	इ	ḍ
आ	ā	ख्	ḍh
इ	i	ण	ṇ
ई	ī	त	t
उ	u	थ	th
ऊ	ū	द	d
ऋ	r	ध्	dh
ए	e	न	n
ऐ	ai	प	p
ओ	o	फ	ph
औ	au	ब	b
anusvāra	ṁ	भ	bh
visarga	ḥ	म	m
क्	k	य	y
ख्	kh	र	r
ग	g	ल	l
घ	gh	व	v
ङ	ṅ	श	ś
छ	c	ष	ṣ
ज	ch	स	s
झ	j	ह	h
ञ	jh	झ	hṣ
ट	ñ	त्र	tr
ठ	t	त	gñ
ड	ṭ		
ढ	ṭh		

CHAPTER—1

BRAHMĀ IN THE PURĀNAS

WE know that the word *Brahmā* does occur in the *R̥gveda*; but it does not stand for *Brahmā* as god. In this *Veda*, the notion of the personality of *Purāṇic* *Brahmā* is shared by a number of deities like *Prajāpati*¹, *Vācaspati*, *Brahmaṇaspati*, *Brahman*, *Hiraṇyagarbha*, *Dhātā*,² *Vidhātā*,³ etc. Here, the *Vedic* trinity is formed by *Agni*, *Sūrya* and *Indra*.⁴ There is no place for *Brahmā* in it. Like *Brahmā*, neither *Viṣṇu* nor *Rudra* (*Śiva*) are shown related to this trinity. But at the advent of the *Purāṇic* era, *Brahmā* emerges as one of the great gods of the trinity, formed by *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*. In the *Vedic* pantheon, many deities arose and later on, merged into others, a few of them survived in stereotyped forms. Some deities did not take their birth in it; but later on, they sprang from the coalescent personality of other gods and rose to the pinnacle of glory. *Purāṇic* *Brahmā* is of the type. He is understood to be the creator; *Viṣṇu*, the sustainer and *Maheśa*, the destroyer. In this triad, *Brahmā* is the fountain-head and is pre-eminently held to be the master of the world.

Here, it would not be out of place to mention the principal *Purāṇas* and the place occupied by the triad in them. The chief *Purāṇas* are the *Brahmaṇḍa*, the *Brahmavaivarta*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Vāmana*, the *Viṣṇu*, the *Nārada*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Guruḍa*, the *Padma*, the *Varāha*, the *Matsya*, the *Kūrma*, the *Liṅga*, the *Śiva*,

¹*RV.*, X. 85. 43, 184. In the *Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtras* (III. 4), *Prajāpati* is shown as merged in the personality of *Brahmā*.

²*RV.*, I. 123.5; VII. 35.3; X. 182.2, 85.47, 128.7, 158.3, 184.1, 190.3

³*Ibid.*, VI. 50.12; IX. 81.5; X. 82.2-3

⁴A.A. Macdonell, *The Vṛhaddevatā* Vol. VI. (Delhi, 1965), p. 17

the *Skanda* and the *Agni*. This list of the *Purāṇas* is found in the *Purāṇas* themselves; but in some *Purāṇas*, the *Vāyu-Purāṇa* is mentioned in the place of the *Śiva-Purāṇa*.

The modern Hinduism is very much influenced by the *Purāṇas*; for they have given birth to the theistical notion, which is the very base of Hinduism. As a matter of fact, there are a number of gods in the *Purāṇas*; but each *Purāṇa* is found emphasizing one god's fidelity and worship. And, at the same time, the very *Purāṇa* does not undermine the importance of other gods. This truth can be established by the study of the *Purāṇas*, wherein there is a special worship of one particular god and, side by side, other gods have also been praised. The *Purāṇas* are full of teachings of various sects of the Hindus. That is why, they are called *Sāttvika*, *Rājasa* and *Tāmasa*. The *Viṣṇu*, the *Nārada*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Garuḍa*, the *Padma* and the *Varāha* are called *Sāttvika* and they stand squarely for the worship of *Viṣṇu*. The *Brahmāṇḍa*, the *Brahmavaivarta*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Vāmana* and the *Brahma* are the *Rājasa* and they propound the worship of *Brahmā*. The *Matsya*, the *Kūrma*, the *Līṅga*, the *Śiva*, the *Skanda* and the *Agni* are called *Tāmasa-Purāṇas* and they are related to the worship of *Śiva*. According to the *Padma-Purāṇa*, the *Sāttvika-Purāṇas* provide us with salvation; the *Rājasa* the heaven; and the *Tāmasa* the hell.⁵ But the viewpoint of the *Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa* is different. According to it, the *Rājasa-Purāṇas* give a detailed account of *Karmakāṇḍa*, whereas the *Tāmasa-Purāṇas* are deemed to be adherent to *Śākta-dharma*.⁶ These categories of the *Purāṇas* as shown above, may differ being mentioned from one *Purāṇa* to another. This is evident from the following:—

THE PADMA-PURĀṆA

I. The Sāttvika-Purāṇas

1. The *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*
2. The *Nārada-Purāṇa*
3. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*
4. The *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*

THE BHAVIṢA-PURĀṆA

I. The Sāttvika-Purāṇas

1. The *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*
2. The *Skanda-Purāṇa*
3. The *Padma-Purāṇa*
4. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*

⁵PdP., VI. 263.85

⁶BhavP., III. 3.28, 13, 15

sāttvika mokṣadāḥ proktāḥ rājasāḥ svargadāḥ śubhāḥ !
tathaiva tāmasāḥ devi nirayaprāptihetavaḥ !!

5. *The Padma-Purāṇa*6. *The Varāha-Purāṇa*5. *The Brahma-Purāṇa*6. *The Garuḍa-Purāṇa*II. *The Rājasa-Purāṇas*1. *The Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*2. *The Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*3. *The Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*4. *The Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa*5. *The Vāmana-Purāṇa*6. *The Brahma-Purāṇa*II. *The Rājasa-Purāṇas*1. *The Matsya-Purāṇa*2. *The Kūrma-Purāṇa*3. *The Nṛsiṃha-Purāṇa*4. *The Vāmana-Purāṇa*5. *The Śiva-Purāṇa*6. *The Vāyu-Purāṇa*III. *The Tāmasa-Purāṇas*1. *The Matsya-Purāṇa*2. *The Kūrma-Purāṇa*3. *The Liṅga-Purāṇa*4. *The Śiva-Purāṇa*5. *The Skanda-Purāṇa*6. *The Agni-Purāṇa*III. *The Tāmasa-Purāṇas*1. *The Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*2. *The Varāha-Purāṇa*3. *The Agni-Purāṇa*4. *The Liṅga-Purāṇa*5. *The Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*6. *The Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa*

The characteristics of the *Rājasa-Purāṇas*, according to the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, are as under :—

The *Brahma-Purāṇa* is called so; because it was described to Marici by Brahmā and it contains thirteen thousand verses.⁷ This *Purāṇa* is variously termed as the *Purāṇa* of Brahmā and the *Saura-Purāṇa*; because it deals in part, with the worship of the sun (*Sūrya*). It is known as a *Vaiṣṇava* work⁸ and there is predominance of the *Rajas*⁹ property in it. Brahmā is embodied portion of the *rajo guṇa* and, therefore, it may aptly be called the *Purāṇa* of Brahmā. The *Devibhāgavata-Parāṇa* puts forth that the *Brahma-Purāṇa* is called so; because it is '*Ayutasāṅkhyaka*', i.e., it has got ten thousand verses.¹⁰ The *Purāṇa*, in which, Brahmā has described the history of the *Aghorakalpa*, the magnificence of the sun, the existence of the universe,

⁷MP., LI.11.13

⁸H.H. Wilson, *Analysis of the Purāṇas* (Delhi, 1979), pp. 8-9

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 146

¹⁰"Brahmā, the Creator, is in fact only an embodied portion of the *Rajo Guṇa*, the quality of passion or desire, by which the world was called into being."

¹¹DBhāP., I. 3.5

"*śatāḥ cāyutasāṅkhyaka purāṇaṁ brahmasaṅjñakam*"

exhibiting peculiar qualities of aggregate multitude to Manu, is known as the *Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa*, which contains 14,500 verses.¹¹ A mention of this *Purāṇa* is made in the *Āpastambadharmasūtra*¹²; but that glorified book is not available. The word *Aghorakalpa*, as referred to above, is implicitly a compound word formed from *Aghora*+*Kalpa*. *Aghora* stands for Śiva and one of the *Pañcopaniṣadas*—consisting of *Tatpuruṣa*, *Aghora*, *Sadyojāta*, *Vāmcdeva* and *Īśāna*.¹³ Most probably, Śiva seems to be referred to here. Monier Williams makes it out as: “an euphemistic title of Śiva; a worshipper of Śiva and Durgā and the fourteenth day of the dark half of *Bhādra*, which is sacred to Śiva.”¹⁴ *Kalpa* denotes a period of one thousand *Yugas* or fourteen *Manvantaras* and, therefore, the fourteenth day of the dark of *Bhādra* does not befit here in the light of notion underlying the *Kalpa*. We, therefore, should resort to the *Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa*, where the *Aghorakalpa* is explained.

The *Purāṇa*, which begins with the description of the *Rathāntara-Kalpa* and, in which, Sāvarṇi Manu has described to Nārada, the glory of Kṛṣṇa and the history of the *Rathāntara-Kalpa* and, in which, there is also a constant allusion to Brahmaparāha, is known as the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*. It contains 18,000 verses.¹⁵ The *Purāṇa*, which begins with the story of the birds, solving the difficulty of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and, to which, the pious sages explain in an answer to the question of the sage Jaiminī, and which has been described, at great length, by the sage Mārkaṇḍeya, at the request of Ṛṣis, and which contains 9,000 couplets, is known as the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*.¹⁶

The *Purāṇa*,¹⁷ in which, the four-faced Brahmā has described the glories of *Trivikrama*, and which describes the three *Vargas* also to the *Devas*, after declaring the glories of Vāmana, is known as the *Vāmana-*

¹¹MP, LIII. 30-32

¹²ADS., II. 24. 5-6

¹³Padmini Menon, *Purāṇa Sandarbha Kośa* (Kanpur, 1968), p. 12

¹⁴Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi, 1974), p. 7

¹⁵MP., LIII. 33-3-4; See also H.H. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 93

“The Brahma Vaivarta is so named, because it records the manifestation of the Supreme Being in worldly form, by the interposition of Kṛṣṇa, who is himself the Supreme Spirit, the Parabrahma or Paramātmā from whom, Prakṛiti, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and the rest proceeded.”

¹⁶MP., III. 25-26

¹⁷*Ibid.*, III. 44-45

Purāṇa.¹⁸ It contains 10,000 verses. It describes the *Kalpa* and is auspicious. Through this *Purāṇa*, Vāmana shows his *Trivikrama* form and binds Bāli and sends him to *Pātāla*.¹⁹

The *Purāṇa*, which commences with the magnificence of the cosmic egg, and in which, Brahmā has described the future *Kalpas* along with the history of the universe to the *Devas*, is called the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa*. It has got 12,200 verses:

“brahmā brahmāṇḍamāhātmyamadhikṛyābravītpūṇaḥ !
tacca dvādaśasāhasraṁ brahmāṇḍam dviśatādhikam !!”²⁰

It is an accepted fact that the *Vedas*, particularly the *R̥gveda*, have left the seal of impression on the vast *Purāṇic* literature. As a matter of fact, the latter stands for anthropomorphism and the former for subtle thoughts and notions. The pre-*Vedic* culture, which has recently been discovered from the vestiges of the Harappa and Mohenjo Daro excavations, had evidently undergone change owing to seismic movements and a violent cataclysm. The *Vedic* period starts afterwards. The *R̥gveda* comes first, which represents the ancient Hindu or the Aryan culture that went on uninterrupted through the various epochs of the *Vedic* lore, i.e., the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, *Gṛhyasūtras*, *Upaniṣads*, etc. The crux of the culture of this period remained dormant and was confined to intelligentsia or religious ministers (priests) only. The *Purāṇas* have interestingly and squarely simplified the very culture subsequently according to their own ways and made it available within the reach of the common man. This commonised religion is called Modern Hinduism. Therefore, the *Purāṇas* are very much indebted to the wide range of the *Vedic* literature as referred to above. It is a proverbial saying that without the knowledge of the *Purāṇas* and history, one will not be able to understand the *Veda*.

itihāsa purāṇābhyāṁ vedaṁ samupavṛṇhayet !
vibhetyalpaśrutātpraharediti māmayaṁ !!

In the above, only the *Rājasa-Purāṇas* have been said to be related to Brahmā; for the latter resembles the embodied *Rajso Guṇa*, and

¹⁸For detail see *YāmP.*, Chapter XXIII.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, Chapter LXV.

²⁰*MP.*, L111. 55

this *Guṇa* is the very creative force of the universe. Since Brahmā is possessed of this power, being the Supreme Being, he is known as Karmabrahma, through whom, the former manifests himself. The other principal *Purāṇas* have not been mentioned here; for an attempt has been made in the *Purāṇas* themselves to show that they are correlated in their entirety to each other systematically.²¹ It is, therefore, imperative to show the picturesque personality of Brahmā, developed in the *Purāṇas*, in toto. In this volume, an attempt has been made to put forth only a few important traits of the personality of Brahmā.

²¹Cf. Pt. Mādhavācārya, *Purāṇadigdarśanam* (Delhi, Śaṃvat 2028), pp. 71-73

CHAPTER—2

BIRTH OF BRAHMĀ

BRAHMA, the Supreme Being, has no birth and death; but when he transforms himself into Karmabrahma, the latter also known as Brahmā, has his birth and death. A detailed account of the birth of this Brahmā, according to various *Purāṇas*, is given below

1. THE BRAHMA-PURĀṆA

In the first chapter of this *Purāṇa*, the birth of Brahmā has been referred to in full detail. At the outset, it is described as to how the *Sanātana-Sṛṣṭi* rose up. Here, Brahma is called Śvayambhū', i.e., who is born at his will and no other cause is responsible for his birth. Brahmā was desirous of creating progeny. He, therefore, created waters, first of all and deposited in them a seed, from which 'Nara' took his birth. This 'Nara' is termed as Nārāyaṇa and, he was lying on the waters (*Nara*). From the navel of this Nārāyaṇa, there arose a golden-egg and Brahmā as Hiranyagarbha Bhagavān took his birth from this egg. He divided the egg and made the earth and the heaven from the separated parts.¹ The creation began developing variously from Brahmā afterwards.²

This statement of the *Brahma-Purāṇa* has its own peculiarity. Usually, it is held that Nārāyaṇa was sleeping in the milk-ocean and a lotus originated from the navel of Nārāyaṇa; Brahmā took his birth from it. This proposition will be taken into account later on;

¹BrP., I.37-40 (Prayāga edition)

²Ibid., I.41 ff.

but we have to explain the above assertion to the satisfaction of the scholars.

Here, at a time, we see the glimpses of three types of the personality of Brahmā. He is Svayambū, Nārāyaṇa and Hiraṇya-gharbha. To explain: There is no denying the fact that before the beginning of the world, there was Brahma alone, who was called Svayambhū (self-born) and *Aja* (unborn). Brahmā proceeded from Brahman, who was the first cause and also got identified with Brahma. Usually, in the *Purāṇas*, Nārāyaṇa is identified with Viṣṇu. At a place, in the *Brahma-Purāṇa*, the reason of Brahmā's being called Nārāyaṇa, is given as below.

*ayanam tasya tāḥ pūrvvaṁ ten nārāyaṇaḥ smṛtaḥ !!
hiraṇyavarṇamabhavattaḍaṇḍamudakeśayam !!³*

Brahmā as Hiraṇyagarbha, also resided there for years⁴ and manifested himself variously. All his manifestations, therefore, were for him and of him. In the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* of the *Rgveda*,⁵ *Puruṣa* has already been shown existing there. Another deity from this *Puruṣa* proceeded and he came to be known as Nārāyaṇa, who descended from *Nara*—the primeval male, called *Puruṣa*.⁶ The other evidences show that from Brahma, i.e., the primeval *Puruṣa*, Brahmā came out and extended the world. The nucleus of these two accounts, does not differ. Therefore, on this basis, Nārāyaṇa and Brahmā are identical. Moreover, in the *Purāṇas*, Brahmā is said to be Nārāyaṇa, '*brahmā nārāyaṇātmakaḥ*.'⁷ In the *Manusmṛiti*, Nārāyaṇa is also identified with Brahmā.⁸ This mode of identification of Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) can be justified as follows. According to the literal meaning, Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa=Hari) is one, who is all-pervading. This sense is intelligible

³*Ibid.*, I.39

⁴*Ibid.*, I.40-41

⁵*RV.*, X.90

⁶*James Hastings, Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. II (Third Impression), p. 811

...*Puruṣa* was in the beginning and from him, the world originated. The deity rising from this *Puruṣa* is called Nārāyaṇa (i.e., descended from *Nara*; the primeval male)—a name which is also complied with *Puruṣa* in the *Śatapatha—Brāhmaṇa*".

⁷*Viṣṇu P.*, I.3.24

⁸*MS.*, I.5ff.

from the root $\sqrt{\text{viṣ}}$ in *Viṣṇu*, meaning thereby to enter or pervade.⁹ This sense is also implied by *Brahmā*; for he represents the whole universe as the soul (*Ātman*) or Supreme Being, beyond space and time.¹⁰ It is, probably, for this reason that *Brahmā* has also been identified with *Nārāyaṇa*.

Another account for the origin of *Brahmā* is given at another place of the *Brahma-Purāṇa*.¹¹ The source of this theme is the same as one as put forth above.

2. THE BRAHMAVAIVARTA-PURĀṆA

The *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa* seems most sectarian work of all the *Purāṇas*. It exhorts us for faith in *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā*; for it holds them in high esteem and reverence. According to this *Purāṇa*, *Kṛṣṇa* is *Ātman* (*Paramātman*)—the Supreme Being.¹² Although, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa* has several times been taken independently in this *Purāṇa*; but he has also been identified with *Paramātman* or *Brahman*.¹³ We have already pointed out that *Brahma* transforms himself into *Brahmā*, when he is desirous of creation. In this state, *Brahmā*—outsprung from *Brahma*—starts creating the universe along with manifold living and non-living things. Similarly, the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa* records the manifestations of *Brahma* with the intervention of *Kṛṣṇa*. But *Kṛṣṇa*, unlike *Brahma*, himself is the Supreme Spirit or *Paramātman* and produces *Prakṛti*, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and the rest.¹⁴ From this assertion, we come to the conclusion that *Brahmā* took his birth from *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa not only produces *Brahmā*; but also gives birth to his

⁹Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 946

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 689

¹¹*BrP.*, CLXL-11

¹²*BrP.*, I. 3. 54

“*āvīrbabhūva tatpāścānmukhataḥ maramātmanah*”

¹³*Ibid.*, II.1-20, “*kṛṣṇasya paramātmanah*”; see also *ibid.*, II. 1.48 and Anand Swarupa Gupta, *Purāṇam Half—Yearly Bulletin of the Purāṇa Department*, Vol. IV, NO. 1 (Ram Nagar, Varanasi, Jan. 1962), p.54

¹⁴*Cf.* H.H. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p.93

“The *Brahma Vaivarta* is so named, because it records the manifestations of the Supreme Being in worldly forms, by the interposition of *Kṛṣṇa*, who is himself the Supreme Being, the *Parabrahma* or *Paramātmā*, from whom *Prakṛiti*, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, *Śiva* and the rest proceeded.”

spouse, called Sarasvatī along with Mahālakṣmī and Durgā. In this context, he is said to have generated Sarasvatī from his mouth, being Paramātmā himself.¹⁵

At another place, the same *Purāṇa*, virtually, following the *Sāṅkhya* theory of creation, puts forth a detailed account for the origin of unanimously accepted wife of Brahmā, called Sarasvatī. It holds that there is *Ātman*, whose energy (*Śakti*) is called '*Mūlaprakṛti*'. But how things evolved from this '*Mūlaprakṛti*' is to be seen. In this context, it has been shown, at a place, in this *Purāṇa* that at the primeval stage, this *Ātman* was stationary; but when he had a desire for creation, he took two forms-male and female. The female form came to be styled as *Prakṛti*. This *Prakṛti* also, according to the wishes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, became a fivefold form under the name of Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī. In this manner, Sarasvatī, the spouse of Brahmā, has been reckoned to be one of the five *Prakṛtis* that are the ultimate cause of the universe.¹⁶

Thus, from the above observations, we come to know that Brahmā along with the Purāṇic male triad, took his birth from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, on the one side, and Sarasvatī along with the *Purāṇic* female triad, on the other.

Generally, Savants do not agree with such type of renderings of the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, on the ground that the statements as such of this *Purāṇa*, do not inhibit much of any veracity of truth and validity. They are of the view that this *Purāṇa* has no collateral authority; therefore, most of the stories narrated, are insipid and do not deserve any investigation.¹⁷ To us, they (scholars) seem to be right to some extent. Śrī Kṛṣṇa has, virtually, sprung from the *Purāṇic* triad of the gods. He has no place in the *Vedic* pantheon, whereas Sarasvatī along with Bhārati and Mahi (Ilā), forms a *Vedic* trinity of the goddesses and is the chief of them.¹⁸ Nay, she is one of the most celebrated divinities of the *Vedic* origin. We have already seen in the beginning that Brahmā does not happen to be in the *Vedic* pantheon. Prajāpati, Viśvakarman, Bṛhaspati, etc., are the other gods for him there. *Ātman* is also there as the Supreme Being, who manifests

¹⁵ *BvP*, I.3.54-57

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II.1.1 ff.

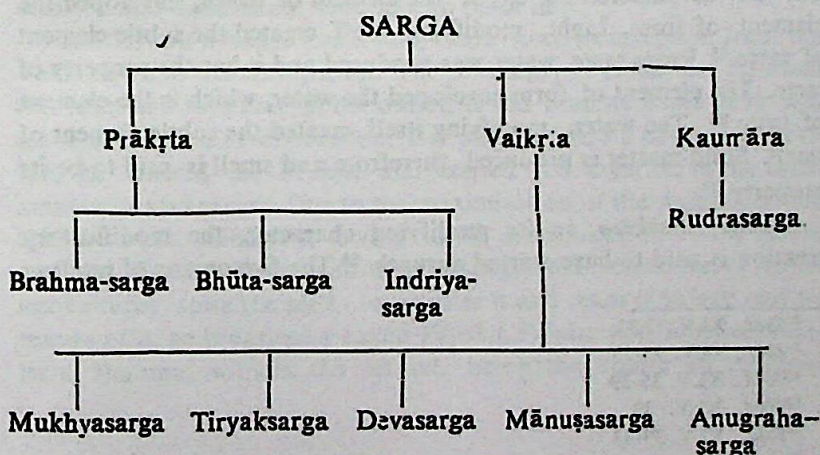
¹⁷ H.H. Wilson, *op.cit.*, pp. 91-92

¹⁸ See Dr Mohd Israil Khan, *Śarasvatī in Sanskrit Literature* (Crescent Publishing House, F/D-56, New Kavinagar, Ghaziabad, U.P., India, 1978), pp.62-68

himself in the worldly forms through other divinities. Thus, responsibility rests with us to milk out the cream of the above theme, which is narrated in the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*.

3. THE MĀRKANDEYA-PURĀṆA

The *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* has far more to say on the birth of Brahmā than any other *Purāṇas*. It refers to this, in detail, at different places, with some variance. Following the *Pañcalakṣaṇa* of the *Purāṇas*, which is said to be the main aim of the *Purāṇas*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*¹⁹ says how the creation started. It holds that, at the beginning, there were *Prākṛti* and *Puruṣa*; and both of them were standstill. Later on, *Parameśvara* entered them and the creation started thereby owing to the vibration in *Prākṛti*. Consequently, three types of creation—namely, the *Prākṛta*, the *Vaikṛta* and the *Kaumāra* developed. The *Prākṛta* underwent three changes—the *Brahma-Sarga*, the *Bhūta-Sarga* and the *Indriya-Sarga*. The *Vaikṛta-Sarga* changed into five forms—the *Mukhya-Sarga*, the *Tiryaksarga*, the *Devasarga*, the *Mānuṣasarga* and the *Anugrahasarga*. The *Kaumārasarga* is also called the *Rudra-Sarga*. Brahmā took his birth from the *Brahmasarga*, wrought by *Parameśvara* first. This could be understood from the following :



¹⁹Cf. *MārP.*, Chapter XLVII.

Chapter XLV of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*, comparatively gives rather a more detailed estimation of the birth of Brahmā. According to his *Purāṇa*, the root cause of this world is *Pradhāna*, which is imperceptible, subtle, permanent and is composed of good and evil.²⁰ At the beginning of the creation, Brahma alone existed, who is known as certain, imperishable, undecaying, immeasurable, selfdependent, destitute of odour, form and taste. He is also termed as devoid of sound and touch, without beginning or end, the origin of the universe, unchanged by the power of the three qualities. He is neither modern nor knowable. At the dissolution, he pervaded the universe squarely.²¹ At the time of dissolution, the three qualities existed in equipoise in Brahma and, at the time of creation, the qualities were created in him and the first principle (*Pradhāna*) came into existence. It developed into *Mahat*, characterised by goodness, passion and ignorance. *Ahaṅkāra* was evolved by it, having threefold qualities of the Modifying, the Energizing and the Evolving²² and they all symbolise darkness.²³ Now, the Evolving *Ahaṅkāra* created subtle element of sound and from the subtle element of sound, the Ether came, which has the property of sound. Next born was the subtle element of touch, then the air took its birth, the property of which is touch. The air, modifying itself, created the subtle element of form and the light was produced from the air. It is said to have the property of form.²⁴ The air as understood to be the element of touch, enveloped the element of form. Light, modifying itself, created the subtle element of taste.²⁵ From taste, water was produced and it has the property of taste. The element of form enveloped the water, which is the element of taste.²⁶ The water, modifying itself, created the subtle element of smell. Solid matter is produced therefrom and smell is said to be its property.²⁷

From *Ahaṅkāra*, in its modifying character, the modificatory-creation is said to have started abruptly.²⁸ The five organs of intellect

²⁰*Ibid.*, XLV. 32-33

²¹*Ibid.*, XLV. 33-35

²²*Ibid.*, XLV. 35-39

²³*Ibid.*, XLV. 39

²⁴*Ibid.*, XLV. 39-43

²⁵*Ibid.*, XLV. 43

²⁶*Ibid.*, XLV. 44-45

²⁷*Ibid.*, XLV. 45-46

²⁸*Ibid.*, XLV. 48

and the five organs of actions, including mind, are known to be the Vaikārika deities.²⁹ There is complete unity and harmony, in these elements-subtle and gross. These elements are governed by the soul and through the favour of the Imperceptible, *Mahat* and the other principles, an egg is caused to come into existence.³⁰ The egg was small, at its primeval stage, like a bubble on water. It started developing gradually. The soul was inside the egg and when the egg was fully-grown, the soul had to be separated and it sprang from *Prakṛti*. The soul took the name of Brahmā, the first corporeal being and is also called *Puruṣa*.³¹

From this estimate, regarding the birth of Brahmā, we have to deduce some singular results. Here, the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy has fundamentally been followed up; but this school has, unequivocally, the blend of monotheism. Thus, the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy is two-forked-theistical and non-theistical. The former may also be termed as the *Seṣvara* and the latter, the *Nirīśvara*. Before the work of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa, the *Sāṅkhya* was the theistical; because there existed a Supreme Being, at the beginning. *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa* were also there; but they were inactive; for they did not receive the support of Soul, representing the Supreme Being. So all creation started at the behest of the Supreme Being, who actuated the *Pradhāna*; whereas, in the *Nirīśvara School*, the *Pradhāna* itself is the supreme authority in the matter of creation and dissolution. God has no place in it.

The *Seṣvara Sāṅkhya* has a long chain since its inception from the Vedic down to the Gītā period. The *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa* has followed this tenet and says that, at the outset, it was Brahma alone or he was alone at the time of dissolution. But when he had a desire for creation, he entered the *Prakṛti* and started the creation in the usual manner as said earlier. Due to the maximization of the *Rajas*, Brahmā took his birth. Similarly, owing to the maximization of the *Sattva* and the *Tamas*, Viṣṇu and Rudra originated respectively. As an agriculturist sows the seed, looks after it and reaps it at last; and by reason of it, he is variously called *Vāpaka*, *Pālaka* and *Lāvaka*. Similarly, Brahma, without the second, being the source of creation,

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XLV.49-50

³⁰ *Ibid.*, XLV.61-62

³¹ *Ibid.*, XLV.62-64

maintenance and dissolution, is called Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra (Śiva).³²

In the *Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudiprabhā* of Vachaspati Mishra, there is the mention of two types of creation—the *Bhāva-Pariṇāma* (the creation of intellect) and the *Liṅga-Pariṇāma* (production of the rudiments of the elements). The former creation is of eight types—*Dharma*, *Adharma*, *Jñāna*, *Ajñāna*, *Vairāgya*, *Avairāgya*, *Aiśvarya* and *Anaiśvarya*.³³ The *Tanmātra Pariṇāma* (*Liṅga-Pariṇāma*) is primarily of three types—the *Daivaśṛṭi*, the *Tairyaśṛṭi* and the *Mānuṣaśṛṭi*. The *Daivaśṛṭi* begot Brahmā along with Prajāpati, Indra, piṭṛ, Gandharva, Yakṣa, Rākṣasa and Piśāca. Thus, it makes this creation itself of eight types. Cattle, birds, serpents, trees, creepers, etc., come in the periphery of the *Tairyaśṛṭi*. This, too, is of five types. The *Mānuṣa Śṛṭi* (the creation of men) is one of them.³⁴ In a nutshell, this physical creation or gross (perceptible) creation is evolved out of the *Tanmātras*; therefore, it is called the *Tanmātra-Pariṇāma*.

In this respect, we have to note that Brahmā did spring as a result of creation of *Liṅga* (*Tanmātra*). Ether, the *Bhāva Pariṇāma* or the *Liṅga-Pariṇāma*, both are born at the instance of *Pradhāna* (Imperceptible) and Brahma or the Supreme Being has nothing to do with *Pradhāna*; for *Pradhāna* has been shown earlier actuated by Brahma for creation, at a fixed interval or gap of dissolution of the world.

4. BIRTH AND DEATH OF BRAHMĀ

The people of India have faith in the birth and re-birth theory. This notion seems to have been cherished since long as modern researches have proved it. Moreover, the popular belief also convinces us about it. Besides, the *Purāṇas* have a landmark lead in this theory. They not only show their deep leaning towards the birth and re-birth theory; but have also ascertained a specific length of a period, in which, one has to live and die at the lapse of that prescribed period for a fresh or new birth, actuated by the *Karma*—good or bad. Brahmā is a glaring example of it.

³² Acārya Badrinātha Śukla, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa—Eka Adhyana* (Vārāṇasī, 1951), pp. 94-95; *MārP.*, XLVI.

³³ *SānK.*, 52

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 53

The *Kūrma*, the *Bhaviṣya*, the *Matsya*, the *Mārkaṇḍeya*, the *Vāyu*, the *Līṅga*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Manusmṛiti* and the *Mahābhārata* have equally ascertained the length of the period of mortals and immortals. However, some similarity and dissimilarity are discernible, in the viewpoints, they hold. A day of Brahmā is deemed to be thousand times of the aggregate of the four *Yugas*; but we must also know the length of specific *Yuga*. The *Padma-Purāṇa*³⁵ holds that fifteen nimeṣas (twinklins) constitute a *Kāṣṭhā*, thirty *Kāṣṭhās*, one *Kalā*, thirty *Kalās*, one *Muhūrtta* and thirty such *Muhūrttas* constitute a day and night for mortal.³⁶ Thirty such nights and days make a month, six such months form a *Ayana* and two *Ayanas*, a year. Twelve thousand such divine years compose the total period of the four *Yugas*—the *Ṛta*, the *Tretā*, the *Dvāpara* and the *Kali* and each year consists of three hundred and sixty days. The period preceding a *Yuga* is termed as *Sandhyā* and the period following a *Yuga*, is called *Sandhyānsa*. H.H. Wilson, in his monumental work—the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa*—has worked out this period in detail.³⁷ One thousand times of the aggre-

³⁵ Cf. H.H. Wilson, *The Vishṇu-Purāṇa* (Calcutta, 1972), p.26, f.n.3

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.20-21 "15 Nimeṣas = 1 *Kāṣṭhā*, 30 *Kāṣṭhās* = 1 *Kalā*, 30 *Kalās* = 1 day and night."

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.22

"Krita Yuga	= 4000	
Sandhyā	= 400	
Sandhyānsa	= 400	
		<hr/>
		4800
Tretā Yuga	= 3000	
Sandhyā	= 300	
Sandhyānsa	= 300	
		<hr/>
		3600
Dvāpara Yuga	= 2000	
Sandhyā	= 200	
Sandhyānsa	= 200	
		<hr/>
		2400
Kali Yuga	= 1000	
Sandhyā	= 100	
Sandhyānsa	= 100	
		<hr/>
		1200
		<hr/>
		12000"

ate of four ages form a day of Brahmā.³⁸ Elsewhere, a day of Brahmā is calculated differently. There, it is said that a *Manvantara* is equal to 852,000 divine years or 306, 720,000 years of mortals, with some additional periods. A day of Brahmā is fourteen times of this period. After which, he sleeps at night, which, too, is of the equal period. At the latter state of Brahmā, everything loses its worldly existence, to exist in Brahmā. A year of Brahmā is made of such nights and days and the full life of Brahmā is of such hundred years.³⁹

Vettam Mani, in the *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*,⁴⁰ has estimated the life span of Brahmā as below :—

“The life-span of Brahmā is shown in the following tabular form :—

360 days for gods	—One Dēva Vatsara
12,000 Deva Vatsaras	—1 Caturyuga (36 lakhs years for human beings)
71 Caturyugas	—Manvantarm (One Manu's life span)
14 Manvantaras	—1 Kalpa (One day time for Brahmā)
2 Kalpas	—One day (and night) for Brahmā (Ahorātra)
360 days of Brahmā	—1 Brahma Varṣa
120 Brahma Varṣas	—One Brahmā's life-span

This life-span of Brahmā is therefore 30 crores 9 lakhs 17 thousands 376 hundreds of years of human beings.”

This duration of the life-span of Brahmā, has been shown taking into account, the notion of the *Kalpa*, *Manvantara* and *Caturyuga*. Besides, a very simplified and understandable; but detailed account has been put forth by the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*. This estimation does not begin with any novelty and renovation; yet the above said idea has been rendered, in very simplified form with the conclusion that when

³⁸*Ibid.*, p.21

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp.22-23; see also f.n.No.7

⁴⁰The *Brahma Valvartta* says 108 years but this is unusual. Brahmā's life is but a Nimesha of Kṛṣṇa according to that work; a Nimesha of Śiva, according to the Śaiva Purāṇa.”

⁴¹Vettam Mani, *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia* (Delhi, 1979), p. 412

the life-span of Brahmā is over,⁴¹ he takes his re-birth at the will of Brahma, who spurs the *Pradhāna* and *Puruṣa* to action. As a result, Brahmā originates in the aforesaid manner.⁴² Pargiter has written a note on the life of Brahmā, based on the texts of the *Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa*. He has given his cogent view on the interpretation of the texts, where a discrepancy seems to surface in the end.⁴³

The duration of a period has an important place in Sanskrit literature and, perhaps, in almost every literature; for when we embark on the study of any branch of Sanskrit lore, we have a subtle notion of the duration of the period, though we may not be sure of its specific span-length. The calculations of time seem to have been made on astronomical, mathematical and many other systems devised by India in by-gone days. We have just seen that in some of the *Purāṇas*, the calculations of the period, are found with minor variance. Some calculations are of little importance and some are of great importance and value. Some calculations have not actually been defined in clear terms, so as to understand the actual length of a period. For instance, a *Manvantara* is said to be equal to seventy-one times of the total years of the four *Yugas*, with some additional years; but these additional years have not been defined in any of the *Purāṇas*. As such, actual calculation may fall prey to some lacunae. However, as we accept the other propositions of the *Purāṇas*, we have to honour their calculations regarding the time as well; for they (calculations) are the results of astronomical and mathematical works, based on intellect. In remote days, these works had reached the pinnacle of glory in the far off countries and the latter were all praise for India on account of these works. On this basis, we may say that the computations of the *Purāṇas*

⁴¹For detail see *MāP.*, XLVI.

⁴²*Ibid.*, XLI. 8 ff.

⁴³F. Eden Pargiter, *The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* (Delhi, 1969), p. 29 f.n. 2 marked as +

".....In verse 31 one of Brahmā's days is said to be 12,000,000 divine years or 4,320,000,000 human years, but 14 times the period mentioned in the latter verses 11,928,000 divine years, or 4,294,080,000 human years. We must bring in here the excess fraction referred to in verse 34, which by calculation is found to be $\frac{3}{7}$, thus $71\frac{3}{7}$ times the Yuga of 12,000 divine years = $857,142\frac{6}{7}$ divine years of the Manvantara and 14 times of this last period exactly—12,000,000 divine years of Brahmā's day. Similarly with regard to human years."

in regard to the *Kalpa*,⁴⁴ *Manvantara*⁴⁵ and *Caturyuga*,⁴⁶ have their own importance. So has the period of birth and death of Brahmā, reckoned by them.

5. OTHER ALLUSIONS TO THE BIRTH OF BRAHMĀ

In our scriptures, it is held that the origin of Brahmā is Lord Viṣṇu. At the beginning, this Lord was alone and later on, he wanted to manifest himself in various forms '*eko haṁ bahu syām*.' He willed so through deep meditation '*yoga nidrā*'. This '*yoga nidrā*' was observed by Viṣṇu, when he was lying on the bed made by the Śeṣanāga's thousand heads, spread like an umbrella. A thousand-petal lotus covered the whole bed. Lying on this very bed, Viṣṇu willed. Due to his *Ikṣāṇa*, meaning divine vibration, there arose a lotus-stem from the navel region of Viṣṇu. Brahmā appeared on it, in a sitting posture.⁴⁷

Usually, almost all the *Purāṇas* hold that Brahma is always in existence and creation is brought forth by him, through Brahmā, i.e., Brahmā assumes the form of Brahmā and starts creating the world. At some other places, following the principles of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, it has been said that the Supreme Reality, i.e., Brahma assumed the form of *Puruṣa* and gave birth to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. But most of the *Purāṇas* hold that Viṣṇu or Śiva is identical to Brahma⁴⁸

⁴⁴For detail see Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, p.262; Vettam Mani, *op.cit.*, pp. 378, 482-485., H.H. Wilson, *op.cit.*, pp. 22 ff.

⁴⁵Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 482; for details see H.H.Wilson, *op. cit.*, Book. III, Chapters I & II.

⁴⁶*Ibid*, p.21. ".....Twelve thousand divine years, each composed of (three hundred and sixty) such days constitute the period of the four yugas, or ages. They are thus distributed: the Krita age has four thousand divine years; the Tretā three thousand; the Dwāpara two thousand; and the Kali age one thousand." See also f.n. 4 here.

⁴⁷This notion has found its nice expression in the *Padma-Purāṇa*. Cf.H.H. Wilson, *Analysis of the Purāṇas* (Delhi, 1979), p.23

".....which from its containing an account of the lotus (Padma)—when Brahmā appeared in order to create the world, is termed the *Padma-Purāṇa*." See also, "Indu" Inderjit, *Science of Symbols* (New Delhi, 1978) p., 21

⁴⁸H.H.Wilson, *op.cit.*, p.24 "Brahma is, in his various functions, Brahmā, Vishnu and Śiva; there is a peculiarity in this Chapter which deserves notice: the different *Purāṇas* commonly identify either Vishnu or Śiva with the Supreme, but in this part of the *Padma*, Brahmā and Brahma are represented the same."

and the latter creates the world through the former. In the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Viṣṇu is the Supreme among the triad of the gods. He is said to have three forms of his *Mūrtis*—*Brāhmī*, *Vaiṣṇavi* and *Raudrī*. The *Brāhmī Mūrti* of Viṣṇu, stands for Brahmā and this *Mūrti* is the result of the *Rajas*, which, according to the *Purāṇic* tenet, represents Brahmā.⁴⁹ According to this estimation of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Brahmā is the *Rājasimūrti* of Viṣṇu.⁵⁰ Thus, he is dependent on Viṣṇu. Besides the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, the *Nārada*, the *Bhāgavata*, the *Gurudā*, the *Padma* and the *Varāha* highly extol and eulogise Viṣṇu. Thus, Viṣṇu is, indubiously, superior. The word *Viṣṇu* is formed from *√viṣ*, meaning to pervade. Accordingly, Viṣṇu is one who is all pervading.⁵¹ In the present context, pervading as a divine quality of Viṣṇu, should be taken in a wider sense; because Viṣṇu is not only omnipresent; but by virtue of his personality, is above other gods and rules over them. Again, his domination should be interpreted in the present context; for Viṣṇu is said to produce Brahmā by the lotus-stem grown in his navel region. Water grows lotus. So water here should be taken in a symbolical sense; because it is pre-eminently required for production of things—living and non-living. There was an egg on the water and Brahmā came out of this egg. Similarly, water produced the lotus and the lotus produced Brahmā.

6. THE BRAHMĀNḌA-PURĀṆA

According to this *Purāṇa*, there is a conjugal procreation in male and female forms. The origin of this procreation is Mahālakṣmī. For this

⁴⁹Cf. Dr. Priya Bala Shah, *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Third Khaṇḍa, Vol. II (Baroda, 1961), p. 138 "Adhyāya 44 describes the divine trinity; VDP worships Viṣṇu and his three mūrtis are called Brāhmī, Vaiṣṇavi and Raudrī. The Brāhmī form is the result of Rajas, the Vaiṣṇavi of Sattva and the Raudrī of Tamas."

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 140; see also *ibid.*, pp. 138-139

⁵¹Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 999 "Viṣṇu, m. (prob. fr. *√viṣ* 'All-pervader' or 'worker') N. of one of the principal Hindu deities (in the later mythology regarded as 'the preserver', and with Brahmā 'the creator', and Śiva 'the destroyer', constituting the well-known Tri-mūrti or triad; although Viṣṇu comes second in the triad, he is identified with the Supreme deity by his worshippers; in the Vedic period, however, he is not placed in the foremost rank, although he is frequently invoked with other gods (esp. with Indra, whom he assists in killing *vṛtra*.....)

purpose, Mahālakṣmī, at first, produced three eggs. Brahmā was produced from one of them along with Śrī, Sarasvatī, from the second along with Śiva and Viṣṇu from the third along with Ambikā.⁵² In a nutshell, it seems that, according to this theory, the three eggs originally symbolise the stage of Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati. This Hiranyagarbha Prajāpati, also, seems to have been born from the Supreme power, Paramātmā, along with the combined notion of the latter's female power (Śakti), called Mahālakṣmī. This Mahālakṣmī as a Supreme Goddess, stands parallel to Paramātmā, the Supreme power, who is giver of birth to the triad of the gods-Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Mahēśa.⁵³ Similarly, the triad of the *Purāṇic* Goddesses-Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Ambikā (Durgā) may be understood to have been produced from the Supreme female power, called Mahālakṣmī.⁵⁴

At the stage of Brahmā's birth, there appear three stages—(1) the Egg-Egg; (2) the world-Egg and (3) the Lotus-stem; but their relation, on philosophical purport, cannot be ruled out. These stages seem to represent the gradual development of originally one stage, which is found in the *Hiranyagarbha-Sūkta* of the *Rgveda*.

In brief, these are some important *Purāṇic* accounts, which deal with the birth of Brahmā.

⁵²BdP., IV.405ff.

⁵³Cf. Acārya Badrinātha Śukla, *op.cit.*, pp.94-95

⁵⁴Cf. T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part. II (Madras, 1914), pp. 335-336. In this regard, a very striking reference is made to the origin of Sarasvatī under various names, all synonyms for her. It is held that there is a *Devī*, who assumes various forms, at the time of creation. The same goddess is said to have divided herself into two parts—male and female, at the command of Mahālakṣmī. As the male portion bears various names, the female portion is known as Vidyā, Bhāṣā, Svāra, akṣara and Kāmadhenu, which are all denotative of Sarasvatī. Similarly, the Sattva form, produced from the goddess Mahālakṣmī, is also called variously such as Mahāvidyā, Bhārati, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhmī, Kāmadhenu, etc. Like the previous ones, these names are also synonyms for the various forms of Sarasvatī. This idea is delineated in the above reference.

CHAPTER—3

OFFSPRINGS OF BRAHMĀ

FROM the study of the various accounts of the origin of Brahmā, we come to know how creation developed and things came into existence. At the beginning, Brahmā was alone and had a desire for creation. His creation is primarily known to be of two types—the *Maithunī* and the *Mānasī*. The *Maithunī Sṛṣṭi* is the one, which comes into being as a result of the union of the male and the female; and this will be discussed here in detail. The *Mānasī Sṛṣṭi* is the one, which is born of Brahmā's mind. It has no physical aspect or existence; or there may be physical appearance; but that would be denotative of some mental or subtle elements, which would not be easily understood by a common man. The *Mānasī Sṛṣṭi* results owing to preponderance of the pre-planning of Brahmā's idea.

1. THE MAITHUNI SRSTI

The *Sṛṣṭi* of Brahmā is aimed at the existence of the world and its continuance, be it the *Maitihunī* or the *Mānasī*. This is what we deduce from an account of the *Matsya-Purāṇa*. According to this *Purāṇa*, Brahmā, first of all, created his ten mind-born sons—Marīci, Arti, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracetas, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu and Nārada.¹ By this creation of his own, Brahmā was not satisfied. He, therefore, began to think of a plan, which could carry on the burden of the creation. Owing to this act of Brahmā, two types

¹MP., III. 5-8

“.....manasaḥ pūrvasṅgā vai jātā yatten mānasāḥ !!
X X X
daśemānamānaḥānbrahmā muninpuṭrānājjanat !!

of the *Maithumī Sṛṣṭi*—in the female and the male forms, originated. Let us discuss both of them.

(i) The Female Creation

According to the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, when Brahmā was not satisfied with the creation of his ten mind-born sons, he began to invoke Sāvitrī.² After sometimes, Sāvitrī was produced from the half portion of his body in a female form. This form is also known by various names such as Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī and Brahmāṇī.³

At another place, Brahmā is again said to have produced a beautiful woman from half of his body as his wife. By virtue of her austerities, she equalled to Brahmā and was gifted with the faculty of the creation of the world.⁴

Elsewhere, Sarasvatī along with four other maids—Lakṣmī, Marutvatī, Sādhyā and Viśveśā—is said to have been produced by Brahmā.⁵ An identical account is recorded in the *Padma-Purāṇa* also.⁶ At another place of the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, Svāhā, Svadhā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaurī are said to have been produced by Brahmā.⁷ Still another verse of this Purāṇa says that Brahmā had no offspring. He, therefore, meditated. In the course of his meditation, Sarasvatī as Śatarūpā was born roaring to him.⁸

In brief, according to various sources, Sāvitrī, Śatarūpā, Gāyatrī, Brahmāṇī, Marutvatī, Sādhyā, Viśveśā, Svāhā, Svadhā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Gaurī, etc., are the female offsprings of Brahmā. Sāvitrī is a post-*Rgvedic* name; for in the *Rgveda*, only 'Sāvitrām' is mentioned once at a place⁹ and not Sāvitrī. But, after the post-

²Sāvitrī is another name of Satarūpā, who is the wife of Brahmā; see Siddheśvara Śāstrī Citrāva, *Prācīna Caritrakośa* (Poona, 1964), p. 1040; see also Sāvitrī under 'Brahman' *ibid.*, pp. 526 ff; for other notions of Sāvitrī *loc. cit.*, and *ibid.*, p. 1040

³MP., III. 30-32

⁴*Ibid.*, CLXXI. 21-22

⁵*Ibid.*, CLXXI. 32-36

⁶*PdP.*, V. 37. 79-80

⁷*Cf. VP.*, IX. 71-87

⁸*Ibid.*, XXIII. 37-38

⁹"brahmaṇaḥ putrakāmasya dhyāyataḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ ||37u||
prādurbhūta mahānādā viśvarūpā sarasvatī ||38 pū||

⁹*BV.*, V. 5.4

Vedic period, Sāvitrī has vividly been referred to in various contexts in the *Mahābhārata*,¹⁰ the *Matsya-Purāṇa*,¹¹ the *Devi-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*,¹² the *Brahmaivaivarta-Purāṇa*, etc. At some places of the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, Sāvitrī has been mentioned as being invoked by Brahmā. She has, subsequently, been shown as produced from the half portion of his body.¹³ Thus, Sāvitrī is the daughter of Brahmā; but Brahmā was so enamoured of the beauty of his own daughter that he married her and enjoyed her company in a lotus—temple.¹⁴ In the Purāṇas, this Sāvitrī is known variously as Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī, Brahmāṇī, etc.¹⁵ In the Ṛgveda, among the female divinities,¹⁶ the wife of Varuṇa is termed as Varuṇānī.¹⁷ Similarly, in the *Matsya-Purāṇa* (III. 30-32), the wife of Brahmā is termed as Brahmāṇī:

sāvitrī lokasṛṣṭyartham hr̥di kṛtvā samāsthitaḥ !
tataḥ sañjapatastasya bhitvā dehakalmaṣam !! 30 !!

strīrūpamardhamakarodardham puruṣarūpavat !
śatarūpā ca sā khyātā sāvitrī ca nigadyate !! 31 !!

sarasvatyatha gāyatrī brahmāṇī ca paramtap !
tataḥ svadehasaṁsūtāmātma-jāmityakalpayat !! 32 !!

According to this text, Sāvitrī, Śatarūpā, etc., are the daughters of Brahmā; for it is evident from “svadeha—saṁsūtāmātma-jām”, which is referred to above. But later on, each of them, became the wife of Brahmā by various names; but they are ultimately one and the same in reality. Lakṣmī is the wife of Viṣṇu¹⁸ and, accord-

¹⁰MP., CCCLXXX. 25-53; CCLXIV. 10

¹¹Ibid., CCVII-CCXIII.

¹²DBhāP., IX. 26-38

¹³MP., III. 30-32

¹⁴Ibid., III. 30-43

¹⁵Siddhēśvara Śāstrī Citrāva, *op. cit.*, p. 529; MP., III. 30-32

¹⁶Mond Israil Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-68

¹⁷RV., II. 32.8

¹⁸Generally, it is accepted that Viṣṇu has Lakṣmī as his wife, but according to the *Brahmaivaivarta-Purāṇa*, Hari (Viṣṇu) had three wives—Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaṅgā (*BṛP.*, II. 6.17). Śrī Kṛṣṇa produced Sarasvatī; but when she showed her affection towards him, he asked her to choose Nārāyaṇa as the object of her love. He told her that he had Rādhā as his wife, and, there-

ing to the above evidence, she has been produced by Brahmā; hence his daughter. In the *R̥gveda*, Sarasvatī is closely associated with the Marutas; therefore, she came to be styled as Marutvatī.¹⁹ According to the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, she was produced by Brahmā by way of producing a *Puruṣa*, who had son-like splendour and had himself a male and female part. Lakṣmī sprang from the female part of this *Puruṣa*.²⁰ All the accounts of the birth of Lakṣmī, do not correspond to each other. For instance, we may say that when Brahmā was to have his birth from the navel region of Viṣṇu, Lakṣmī was already there and was pressing gently the feet of the Lord.²¹ According to another account, when the gods and the demons churned the ocean of milk, there originated fourteen jewels and Lakṣmī was one of them.²² According to this popular belief, Lakṣmī could take her birth only, when the gods collectively churned the ocean. Thus, all the gods caused her birth and Brahmā is one of them. Also, the account of the birth of Brahmā and Lakṣmī's from the ocean, brings them closer; for Brahmā, too, originated from the navel of Viṣṇu, who was sleeping in the ocean.

Varuṇānī is understood to be the wife of Varuṇa and Brahmānī of Brahmā. Similarly, Marutvatī seems to be the wife of the Marutas. Marutvatī has, several times, been referred to in the *R̥gveda*²³ and we may look into these *Mantras* for various notions underlying

fore, there was no room for her to be his wife (*ibid.*, II. 4. 12-19). Thus, Sarasvatī was given to Nārāyaṇa (*ibid.*, II. 2.59). According to one view, Sarasvatī was one of the co-wives of Viṣṇu. But when the latter found that one wife was as much as he could manage, he had to offer Sarasvatī to Brahmā and Gaṅgā to Śiva, while he kept Lakṣmī alone with him. See John Dowson, *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London, 1961), pp. 284-285

¹⁹*RV.*, II. 30.8
²⁰*VP.*, IX. 71-87

²¹See the accounts for the origin of Brahmā as propounded earlier in this Chapter; "Indu" Inder Jit, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22

²²About the birth of fourteen jewels, a popular belief runs as under:

"śrīmaṇirambhāvāruṇī-amiya-śaṅkha-gagarāja !
kalpadrumaśśidhenudhana-dhanvantari-viṣa-vāja" !!

For the birth of Lakṣmī see also *MBhAP.*, XVI. 34; *VīṣP.*, 8.5; *BhāP.*, VIII. 8.8; *PdP.*, *Śrīti Khaṇḍa*; *BvP.*, II. 47.44

²³*RV.*, I.80.4; II. 30.8; VII. 31.8; VIII. 13.28; 76.8; IX. 64. 22, 65.10; 107.17; X. 13.5, etc.

them. Similarly, in the *Purāṇas*, too, she has been referred to at various places. In the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, she is said to be the wife of Dharmā.²⁴ Dakṣa had ten daughters and Marutvatī was one of them.²⁵ Marutvatī, produced by Brahmā, seems to be Sarasvatī;²⁶ for we have ground for this identification. We may refer here to the *Matsya-Purāṇa*. This *Purāṇa* says that Brahmā created five maids—Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Marutvatī, Sādhya and Viśveśā and all of whom were married to Dharma in due course.²⁷ This view gains ground stronger and safer; for we find it endorsed by another *Purāṇa*.²⁸ As we have noted above, Dharma had Marutvatī as his wife and if Dharma had no more wives than one, then Marutvatī—should be taken as identical to Sarasvatī. At such a stage of identification, Dharma may be said to have had only one wife. On this very ground, Sādhya and Viśveśā can also be merged into the personality of Sarasvatī. Svāhā and Svadhā are said to have been created by Brahmā as the wives of the Manes and the fire.²⁹ According to the *Mahābhārata*, Svāhā always lived in the court of Brahmā and glorified him incessantly.³⁰ Sarasvatī, too, has been said to reside always in the court of Brahmā and be at his service. Therefore, it seems that they are identical. Similarly, there is possibility of the merger of Sarasvatī and Svadhā with each other; for the latter was created by Brahmā and had such a trait of her personality that she could be likened to Sarasvatī. To quote:

“Then Brahmā created a woman of beauty, youth, knowledge and power to grant boons, and of good character, from a portion of pure nature, she was named Svadhā, and was given to the Manes as wife.”³¹

The qualities of the goddess Svadhā—such as beauty, youth, knowledge and power to grant boons are similar to those of the goddess Sarasvatī. As a matter of fact, these female divinities, enu-

²⁴Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 491

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 431, Ten daughters of Dakṣa are:

“Arundhatī, Vasu, Yāmī, Lambā, Bhānu, Marutvatī, Saṅkalpā, Muhūrtā, Sādhya and Viśvā.”

²⁶*R.V.*, II.30.8; See for detail Mohd Israil Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44

²⁷*MP.*, CI.XXI. 32-33

²⁸*PdP.*, V. 37.79

²⁹Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 777

³⁰*MBhŚP.*, XI. 42

³¹Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 777

merated as the offsprings of Brahmā, are portrayed as different from one another; but they share the personality of others; or sometimes, they stand synonymous with others. For example, we may quote the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*. It maintains that Brahmā got angry and a *Puruṣa* was born out of his anger. This *Puruṣa* had his body half male and half female. The female, too, was black and white in colour. When asked, the female part divided her white part, which is known variously as Svāhā, Svadhā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaurī.³² This white part is known variously; but these various parts are for the white part; hence no difference. We, therefore, ought to have such ideas in our mind, at the time of ascertaining the female goddesses, who are produced by Brahmā. Some of them, like Lakṣmī, may also be taken differently. In the *Purāṇas*, however, an attempt has been made to identify them, on the ground that they have some identical traits or inner resemblance.

In the *Purāṇas*, sometimes, Viṣṇu is called Mahāviṣṇu³³ and Lakṣmī, Mahālakṣmī.³⁴ Similarly, Sarasvatī is known as Vidyā or Vidyā-Devī; but due to the feeling of love and reverence for her, she is, sometimes, called Mahāvidyā. Sarasvatī, as goddess of learning and intellect, performs multifarious deeds. Endowing human being with intellect (*Medhā*) is one of them. Owing to closeness between cause (*Kāraṇa*) and effect (*Kārya*), the latter may be termed as cause (*Kāraṇa*). Accordingly, Sarasvatī, who gives us *Medhā*, has been called *Medhā*. According to the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, *Medhā* is the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati and his consort is Prasūti, who had fourteen daughters, all of whom, were married to Dharma-deva.³⁵

(ii) A Detailed Account of the Birth of Sarasvatī from Brahmā

Brahmā is famous for his creation, which is of multiform. In literature as well as in various works of poets, women are praised for their beauty. Sometimes, a poet fails to describe the beauty, which is fully blossomed in a woman. He is reconciled with the responsibility resting with Brahmā, who creates it and reveals it. Brahmā is said to have

³²*VP.*, IX. 71-87

³³*Vettam Mani.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 864 ff.

On these pages, Viṣṇu has, several times, been called Mahāviṣṇu.

³⁴*loc. cit.*

³⁵*ViṣP.*, VII.

put into action all his skill and imagination in creating a woman. We happen to see this idea fully translated into practice in the *Purāṇas*. In the present context, we would see how *Brahmā* cherished an idea to create *Sarasvatī* with utmost fineness and fitness. Different *Purāṇas* present different accounts in this regard. Of these, worth-noticing are as under:

(A) The *Matsya* and the *Padma Purāṇas*

In the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, there are several references to *Sarasvatī* which suggest that she is produced by *Brahmā*, the great Creator, who is thought to have created all the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* from his mouth.³⁶ After that, he produced his ten mind-born sons—*Marici*, *Atri*, *Aṅgiras*, *Pulastya*, *Pulaha*, *Kratu*, *Pracetas*, *Vasiṣṭha*, *Bhṛgu* and *Nārada*.³⁷ By this creation of his own, *Brahmā* was not satisfied; therefore, he began to think of a plan, which could carry on the burden of the creation. Then, he began to invoke *Sāvitri*; and after sometimes, *Sāvitri* was produced from the half portion of his body as a female form. This form is also known by various names as *Śatarūpā*, *Sāvitri*, *Sarasvatī*, *Gāyatri* and *Brahmāṇī*.³⁸

At another place, *Brahmā* is again said to have produced a beautiful woman from half of his body as his wife. By virtue of her austerities, she equalled to *Brahmā* and was gifted with the faculty of the creation of the world.³⁹

Elsewhere, *Sarasvatī* along with four other maids—*Lakṣmī*, *Marutvatī*, *Sādhya* and *Vaśveśā*—is said to have been produced by *Brahmā*.⁴⁰ Similar notion occurs in the *Padma-Purāṇa* also.⁴¹

(B) The *Vāyu-Purāṇa*

According to this *Purāṇa*, it is maintained that *Brahmā*, at first, created his mind-born sons (*mānasa-putras*), who equalled themselves to their father *Brahmā*. They all were possessed of knowledge and hence indifferent to the world: “*āgatajñānā vitarāgā vimatsarāḥ*.”

³⁶*Ibid.*, III. 2-4

³⁷*Ibid.*, III. 5-8

³⁸*Ibid.*, III. 30-32

³⁹*Ibid.*, CLXXI. 21-22

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, CLXXI. 32-36

⁴¹*PdP.*, V.37.79-80

'They could not find any pleasure in the worldly lures. *Brahmā* (*Hiranya-garbho Bhagavān-paramēṣṭhī*), therefore, began to think of a plan. During this process, perhaps, not finding out his solution, *Brahmā* became angry. Consequently, from his anger, a *Puruṣa*, having sun-like splendour, took his birth. Half of his body was male and half female. *Brahmā* asked this *Puruṣa* to separate his male and female parts into twin; and he did accordingly. *Brahmā* again asked the male form of *Puruṣa* to divide him. He did so while dividing him into eleven Rudras. Unlike the male form, the female form was of peculiar type. Her right part was white and left black. *Brahmā* again asked this female form to divide her black and white parts, which she did. This white part is taken to be the various manifestations of hers, i.e., Svāhā, Svadhā, Mahāvidyā, Medhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Gaurī. Thus, being one of these, Sarasvatī represents Gaurī (the white coloured goddess), produced from the white part of the female form.⁴²

According to another account available in the *Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī is said to have been produced from *Brahmā* as Viśvarūpā. This *Purāṇa* maintains that *Brahmā* had no offspring. He, therefore, meditated and, in the course of his meditation, Sarasvatī was born roaring to him as Viśvarūpā.⁴³

Here, she is supposed to be the mind-born daughter of *Brahmā*, and at the same time, is also taken to be *Prakṛti*.

(C) The *Brahmānda-Purāṇa*

According to this *Purāṇa*, there is a conjugal procreation in male and female forms. The origin of this procreation is Mahālakṣmī. For this purpose, Mahālakṣmī, at first, produced three eggs. *Brahmā* was produced from one of them along with Śrī, Sarasvatī from the second along with Śiva and Viṣṇu from the third along with Ambikā.⁴⁴ In a nutshell, it seems that, according to this theory, the three eggs originally symbolise the stage of *Hiranyagarbha* Prajāpati. This *Hiranyagarbha* Prajāpati seems to have been born from the Supreme

⁴²Cf. *VP.*, IX. 71-87

⁴³*Ibid.*, XXIII. 37-38

"brahmaṇaḥ putrakāmasya dhyāyataḥ paramēṣṭhinaḥ ||37 ū!!"
prādurbhūtā mahānāḍā viśvarūpā sarasvatī ||38 pū!!

⁴⁴*BdP.*, IV. 405 ff.

power *Paramātman* along with the combined notion of the latter's female power called Mahālakṣmī. This Mahālakṣmī as the Supreme Goddess stands parallel to Paramātman, the Supreme power as giver of the birth to the triad of gods—Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa.⁴⁵ Similarly, the triad of the *Purāṇic* goddesses—Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Ambikā (Durgā) may be taken to have been born from the Supreme female power called Mahālakṣmī.

In this regard, a very striking reference is made to the origin of Sarasvatī by various names, all synonyms for her. It is held that there is a *Devī*, who assumes different forms at the time of the creation. The same goddess is said to have divided herself into two parts—male and female—at the command of Mahālakṣmī. As the male portion bears various names, the female portion is known as Vidyā, Bhāṣā, Svara, Akṣara and Kāmadhenu, which are all denotative of Sarasvatī. Similarly, the *Sattva* form produced from the goddess Mahālakṣmī is also called variously as Mahāvidyā, Mahāvīṇā, Bhārati, Vāk, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhmī, Kāmadhenu, etc. Like the previous ones, these names are also synonyms for the various forms of Sarasvatī.⁴⁶

(iii) The Male Creation

The world of beings cannot go onwards merely because of the birth of the female beings; hence indispensability of the birth of the male beings. This is an established law of Nature with the world of living and the world of gods. The human beings are equally governed by this law. This principle is discernible from the very beginning of the *Ṛgvedic* times. There are gods and goddesses. Sons and daughters are ascribed to some of them. For instance, in the *Ṛgveda*, Uṣas is said to be the daughter of the heaven⁴⁷ and the sister of the night⁴⁸ and the Āditya Bhaga.⁴⁹ Similarly, the concept of sons is also found there. Agni is the son of Viśvānara.⁵⁰ Therefore, he is named as Vaiśvānara. In this context, many other instances are found there. But:

⁴⁵Cf. Ācārya Barinātha Śukla, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95

⁴⁶Cf. T.A. Gopinath Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336

⁴⁷*RV.*, V. 80.5; VII. 78.4; X. 39.12

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, I. 113. 2-3; X. 127.3

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, I. 123.5

⁵⁰*Niru.*, VII. 6

"vaiśvānaraḥ kasmāt, viśvānnarānnavati viśva enaṁ narā nayanātīti vā/apī vā. vāśvānara eva syāt pātvyatīḥ narvāpi bhūtāni"

during the *Purāṇic* period, many gods of the *R̥gvedic* origin are anthropomorphised and are shown to have their wives and sons. Brahmā is a glaring example of this. He has Sarasvatī (Śatarūpā, Sāvitrī, etc.) as his wife and a son is said to have born to this couple. He is named as Svāyambhuva Manu. Besides, Dhātā, Vidhātā, Rudra, Kandarpa, Madhuka, Golikā, Bhṛgu, Jāmbavān, etc., are said to be the sons of Brahmā. A brief description of the birth of Svāyambhuva Manu as a result of the union of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, besides other sons, is given below.

(A) Svāyambhuva Manu

When Brahmā was enamoured of the beauty of his daughter Sarasvatī or Śatarūpā, he married her and enjoyed her company for hundred years in the lotus-temple. On account of their union, Svāyambhuva Manu was born.⁵¹ Besides, there are fourteen other Manus, all of whom are his descendants.⁵²

Besides Svāyambhuva Manu, Sārasvata is also reckoned to be the son of Sarasvatī by God, who asked him to study the *Vedas* and impart the *Vedic* knowledge to others.⁵³ This Sārasvata is the same as Vyāsa and Apāntaratamas. In the *Purāṇas*, sometimes, Vyāsa is said to be the son of Brahmā. Accordingly, Vyāsa is Sārasvata, who was produced by God in Sarasvatī. This God, too, is not different from Brahmā, who is said to be an authority to rule over the *Vedas*⁵⁴ and is the generator of the knowledge. In the *Purāṇas*, Sārasvata has been taken to connote various meanings.⁵⁵

In the *Mahābhārata* also, Sārasvata has been taken to be the son of Sarasvatī. There, at one place, Sārasvata is held to be a *Ṛṣi* and Sarasvatī, a personified river. It has been said that there occurred a famine. On account of this, people lost all the sources to live upon. Brāhmaṇas could not devote themselves to the *Vedic* studies for want of food. Consequently, the entire *Vedic* knowledge was lost.

⁵¹MP., III. 43-44

⁵²Ibid., III. 45-47

⁵³MBhŚP., CCCLIX. 38ff.

⁵⁴For the esoteric meaning of the production of the *Vedas*, see PdP., V. 16. 10-12

⁵⁵This stands for the son of Sarasvatī and Dudhīca (VP., LXV. 91); the twelfth Kalpa (MP., CCXC. 5); son of Jaigīrya (VP., XXIII. 13); a Veda-vyāsa of the ninth dvāpāra (ViṣP., III. 3.13), etc.

Only Sārasvatā could retain it; for his mother saved his life feeding him upon fish. When the drought was over, it was he, who taught the *Vedas* to the *Brāhmaṇas*.⁵⁶

This reference is very important from geographical point of view; for it goes to locate a place, which was inhabited by our forefathers (Āryans). This land is called *Brahmāvarta*, which was made by *Brahmā* himself, between the *Sarasvatī* and the *Dṛṣadvatī* rivers.⁵⁷ The *Sarasvatī* river was so dear to *Brahmā* that it was popularly known as *Brahmanadī*⁵⁸ and also as *Brahmaputrī*⁵⁹ on the basis of association. Elsewhere, she is mentioned, several times, as the daughter of *Brahmā*.⁶⁰ This very *Sarasvatī* was, previously, in the heaven and had to descend on the earth at the wrath of *Gaṅgā* in the heaven.⁶¹ This point draws our attention to two ends. Firstly,

⁵⁶*MbhŚP.*, LII. 251

⁵⁷*MS.*, II. 17

⁵⁸*BhāP.*, IX. 16.23

⁵⁹*Cf. AC.*, IV. 151

This name of *Sarasvatī* according to its origin, has also been recognised by Śrī Hemacandrācārya, who gives two names. (1) *Brahmaputrī* (2) *Sarasvatī*.

⁶⁰*BdP.*, III. 35.44; *PdP.*, V. 18. 165, 37.79 ff; *MP.*, III. 31-32; *BhāP.*, III. 12.28, etc.

⁶¹*BvP.*, II 6. 17-40

This reference contains a mythological interpretation regarding *Sarasvatī*'s coming over to the earth as a river. At first, she is conceived as residing in the heaven along with her husband *Hari* among the company of his co-wives—*Lakṣmī* and *Gaṅgā*. Once *Gaṅgā* in a passionate mood, looked at *Hari* again and again. *Hari* knew it easily and responded to by laughing at her. *Sarasvatī* could not tolerate such an act of *Hari*. She, overpowered by her anger, told *Hari* of his profound love for *Gaṅgā*. When *Hari* saw *Sarasvatī* in such a mood, he went out of the assembly hall leaving *Sarasvatī*, *Gaṅgā* and *Lakṣmī* inside. Then *Lakṣmī* tried her best to appease *Sarasvatī* with her polite words; but could not succeed in her endeavour. *Sarasvatī* cursed her to become like a tree (*Vṛkṣarūpā*) and a river (*Saridrūpā*). When *Gaṅgā* came to know of it, she consoled *Lakṣmī* by saying that *Sarasvatī* herself should be a river and go to the earth, where sinners reside while committing sins. In return, *Sarasvatī* again cursed *Gaṅgā* as she did *Lakṣmī*.

While this was going on, *Hari* returned in and heard of what had happened. But alas, he could not change the sorrow for pleasure. He, therefore, said *Bhāratīlgo* to *Bhāratavarṇa* in consequence of your quarrel with *Gaṅgā* and innocent *Lakṣmī*. Similarly, *Gaṅgā* will go to the abode of *Śiva*. Since *Padmā* (*Lakṣmī*) has remained innocent of all, she should remain here in the heaven with me. Therefore, *Sarasvatī* came down to the earth. Being on

Sarasvatī was in the heaven and Brahmā was enamoured of her matchless beauty. He married her and got a son by her. Secondly, Sarasvatī got down on the earth and was married to a mortal man, called Dadhica. She got a son, who was known as Sārasvata. As we have noticed earlier that this Sārasvata is also known as Vyāsa, who was produced by Brahmā. Sārasvata's affinity and proximity to Brahmā are further enhanced by the fact that he was very much associated with the study of the *Vedas* and imparted their knowledge to others. The creation of the *Vedas* by Brahmā, its subsequent study by own progeny and imparting the knowledge of the same to others, brings Sārasvata near to Svāyambhuva Manu, who is mind or intellect of Brahmā.⁶² According to the *Padma-Purāṇa*, other physical sons of Brahmā are Dakṣa, Dharma, Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Pramoda, Mṛtyu and Bharata.⁶³

(B) Dhātā and Vidhātā

The word 'Dhātā' occurs several times in the *Rgveda*⁶⁴ and so occurs Vidhātā.⁶⁵ Generally, scholars are of the view that both Dhātā and Vidhātā stand for Brahmā in the *Vedas*.⁶⁶ But in the *Purāṇas*, these words are either synonyms for Brahmā or are epithets of Brahmā.⁶⁷ But according to the *Mahābhārata*, these were born to Brahmā and were very obedient and good sons of Brahmā.⁶⁸

(C) Madhuka and Golikā

Madhuka, a giant and golikā, a giantess are said to have been born to Brahmā from his playful habit. This is recorded in the *Uttara-*

the earth, she is called Bhārati; being a priyā of Brahmā, Brāhmī; being the presiding deity of speech, Vāṇī and being stationed covering the world like ever-flowing stream (*srotasye'va*) and becoming related to the ponds of Hari, Sarasvatī.

⁶²See this Chapter further under 'Mānasi Sṛṣṭi of Brahmā'.

⁶³Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *The Matsya Purāṇa—A study* (Varanasi, 1963), p. 35

⁶⁴*RV.*, I. 123.5; VII. 35.3; X. 82.2, 85.47, 128.7, 158.3, 184.1, 190.3

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, V. 60.12; IX. 81.5; X. 82.2—3

⁶⁶Siddhesvara Śāstrī Citrāva, *op. cit.*, p. 526

⁶⁷See further under "Names, Epithets and Attributes of Brahmā."

⁶⁸*MBh.ĀP.*, LX. 51

Rāmāyaṇa.⁶⁹ But in the *Purāṇas*, Madhuka seems to be the same as Madhu, who is born to Mahāviṣṇu along with Kaitabha as his brother and not to Brahmā. In the *Devī-Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, it is held that at the beginning of the creation, there was water everywhere and there was no earth. Mahāviṣṇu was sleeping on the water and a lotus-stalk grew from the navel of the god. At the end of the stalk, a flower originated and that gave birth to Brahmā. Meantime, ear-wax flowed out from the ears of Mahāviṣṇu and Madhu and Kaitabha were born from the ear-wax.⁷⁰ In the *Purāṇas*, generally, Madhu and Kaitabha as two Asuras are said to have been born to Viṣṇu and not to Brahmā. Moreover, Madhu is born with Kaitabha and not with any other female giantess as the Uttara-Rāmāyaṇa proclaims.

(D) Rudra

In the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, a detailed account runs about the birth of Rudra from Brahmā. Like other *Purāṇas*, where Prajāpatīs are said to have been born to Brahmā as his sons, this *Purāṇa* also holds that Brahmā created four sons-Sanandana, Sanaka, Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra before he could create Prajāpatīs. But these sons were indifferent to mundane pleasure as they were great sages and scholars. They were abstinent. When Brahmā found his sons having no interest in the creation of the world, he became angry. Owing to his anger of high order, the whole world shone by radiance that emanated from anger. As a result, his eye-brow got curved and a male figure emerged from the curved eye-brow. This figure was Rudra,⁷¹ whose half body was male and half female. Brahmā ordered this figure to divide the male form, which he did accordingly by dividing it into eleven parts, which are known as eleven Rudras. The names of these Rudras are different in the various *Purāṇas*.⁷²

⁶⁹Vetam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 150

⁷⁰*DBhāP.*, X.1

⁷¹*Viṣṇu-P.*, I.7 ff.

⁷²See Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 654

⁷³The names of the eleven Rudras are given different in different *Purāṇas*. In a text, it is said that the eleven Rudras are Manyu, Manu, Mahinasa, Mahān, Śiva, Rtuḍhvaja, Ugraretas, Bhava, Kāma, Vāmadeva and Dhṛtavrata. According to some other *Purāṇas*, the eleven Rudras are : Aja Ekapāda (Ekapāt), Ahirbu-

(E) Other Sons

Besides these sons, Kandarpa, Jāmbavān, Bṛgu, the Sanakas, etc., are attributed to Brahmā as his sons. Kandarpa is one of the synonyms for Kāmadeva, literally, born of desire. According to the *Kathāsaritśāgara* (*Lāvāṇakalambaka*, *Taraṅga* 6), he was born to Brahmā from his mind. As soon as he took his birth, he stood resolute before his immediate originator and asked: 'Whom should I make proud?' Brahmā named him as *Kandarpa*; for he was possessed of an element of *Darpa* (proud).

In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Jāmbavān is said to be the minister of Sugrīva. Brahmā created him as the goddess Earth and the gods entreated to Brahmā as they were in misery and great troubles caused by Rāvaṇa. Brahmā produced Jāmbavān along with other monkeys to help Rāma in the killing of Rāvaṇa⁷³.

Bṛgu is an important son of Brahmā; for he proved his worth in producing fairly a large family called the Bṛgu *Vamśa* and the members of this family came to be known as Bhā-gavas. Bṛgu is said to have been born twice. Once, he was born from Brahmā's skin⁷⁴ and next time, from the sacrificial fire of *Brahmayajña* of Varuṇa as a result of Brahmā's semen falling into it. He was brought up by Varuṇa and Carṣaṇī as husband and wife.⁷⁵ According to these two accounts, the genealogy of Bṛgu is as under. According to the first, it is as follows:

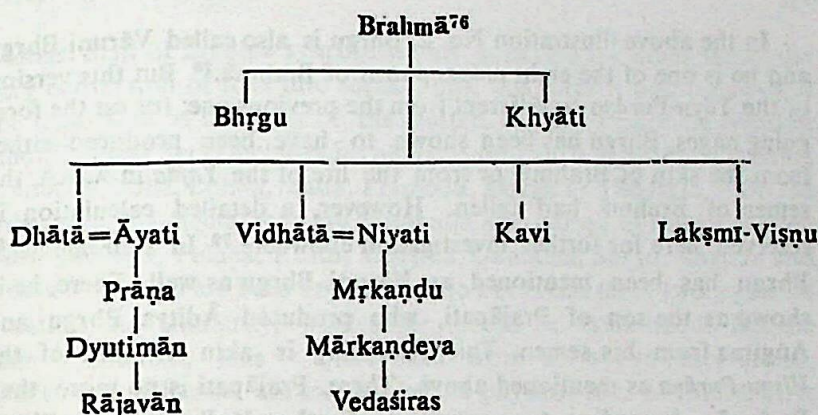
dhnya, Tvaṣṭā, Rudra, Hara, Śambhu, Tryambaka, Aparājita, Isāna and Tribhuvana. Brahmā apportioned to the eleven Rudras eleven positions of the heart, the five organs of the senses and the organs of action and to Rudra the eight positions of life, ether, air, fire, water, earth, the sun and the moon..... From the woman portion eleven Rudrāṇis came into being. They were *Dhī*, *Vṛttī*, *Uṣanā*, *Umā*, *Niyūtā*, *Sarpis*, *Ilā*, *Ambikā*, *Sudhā* and *Dikṣā*."

⁷³*Ibid.*, p. 341, f.n. 1

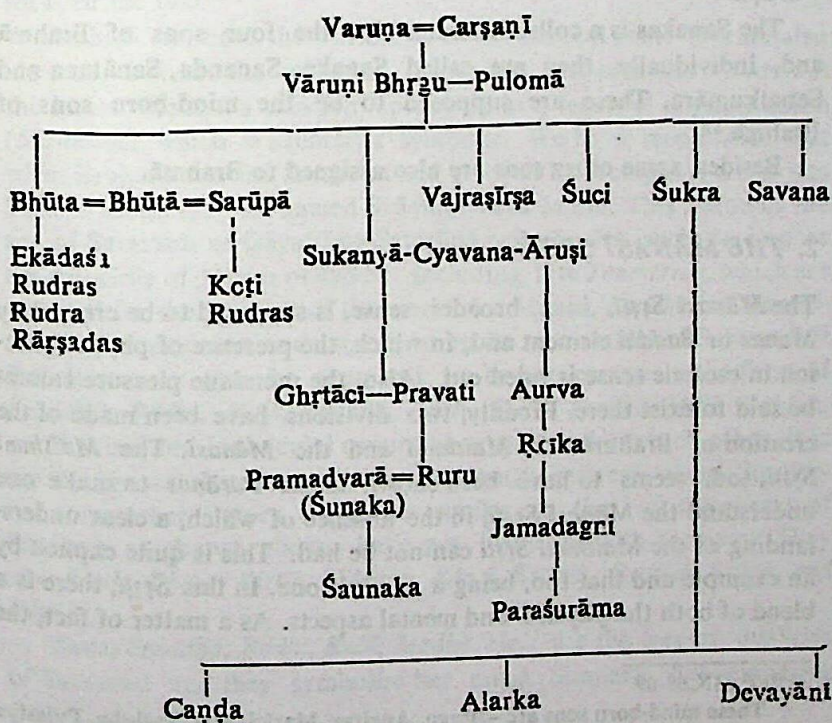
"It is difficult to ascertain whether Jāmbavān was a monkey or a bear. In some of the Indian languages he is described as a monkey. In Malayālam he was thought of as a monkey from ancient period. In *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa*, which is the original work, Jāmbavān is denoted by the words "*Kapi*" (Monkey) and *Rkṣa* (bear). Jāmbavān is called *Rkṣapuṅgava* in *Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa*, *Bālakāṇḍa Sarga* 17. From this it is to be assumed that Jāmbavān was a bear. In the same chapter it occurs that, it was the aim of Brahmā to make the gods and the celestial women take birth as monkeys to help Mahāviṣṇu in the incarnation of Śrī Rāma. So it is not wrong to consider Jāmbavān either as a bear or as a monkey."

⁷⁴*VijP.*, X.

⁷⁵Vetṭam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 140



According to the second, his family grew as under :—



⁷⁶ *BrP.*, II. 11 1-10; 13-26

⁷⁷ For detailed information regarding the family of Bhṛgu see *BhāP.*, IV. 1.45; *ViṣP.*, I. 10.1-5; *MBhAP.*, LX. 48

In the above illustration No. 2, Bhṛgu is also called Vāruṇi Bhṛgu and he is one of the eight *mānas putras* of Brahmā.⁷⁸ But this version of the *Yāyu-Purāṇa* is different from the previous one; for on the foregoing pages, Bhṛgu has been shown to have been produced either from the skin of Brahmā or from the fire of the *Yajña* in which, the semen of Brahmā had fallen. However, a detailed calculation is reserved here for further investigation elsewhere.⁷⁹ In a *Brāhmaṇa*,⁸⁰ Bhṛgu has been mentioned as Vāruṇi Bhṛgu as well. There, he is shown as the son of Prajāpati, who produced Āditya Bhṛgu and Aṅgiras from his semen. This reckoning is akin to that of the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* as mentioned above. There, Prajāpati is no more than Brahmā. According to a number of other *Vedic* sources, Bhṛgu is called 'Bhṛgu Vāruṇi' for the reason that he saw the light from Varuṇa.⁸¹

The Sanakas is a collective name for the four sons of Brahmā and, individually, they are called Sanaka, Sananda, Sanātara and Sanātkumāra. These are supposed to be the mind-born sons of Brahmā.⁸²

Besides, some other sons are also assigned to Brahmā.

2. THE MĀNASĪ SRṢṬI

The *Mānasī Srṣṭi*, in a broader sense, is supposed to be created by *Manas* or *Buddhi* element and, in which, the presence of physical notion in esoteric sense is ruled out. Also, the mundane pleasure cannot be said to exist there. Broadly, two divisions have been made of the creation of Brahmā—the *Maithunī* and the *Mānasī*. The *Maithunī Srṣṭi*, too, seems to have been shown in the *Purāṇas* to make one understand the *Mānasī Srṣṭi*, in the absence of which, a clear understanding of the *Maithunī Srṣṭi* can not be had. This is quite explicit by an example and that too, being a *Purāṇic* one. In this *Srṣṭi*, there is a blend of both the physical and mental aspects. As a matter of fact, the

⁷⁸Y.P., IX.68-69

These mind-born sons are—Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, Marīci, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu.

⁷⁹See Head Line 'Mānas Putras of Brahmā', further in this Chapter.

⁸⁰AtiBr., III. 34

⁸¹ŚBr., XI 6.1.1; Taitt.Ā., IX. 1; PañBr., XVIII. 9.1

⁸²BhāP., II.7.5; II. 12.4; IV. 8.1

Mānasī Sṛṣṭi of *Brahmā* symbolises his Idea and the other shows the very conversion of Idea into form. Thus, this form is nothing beyond the Idea. This is the crux of the matter. *Brahmā*'s physical creation (the *Maithunī Sṛṣṭi*) includes his physical sons such as *Dakṣa*, *Dharma*, *Kāma*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Mada*, *Pramoda*, *Mṛtyu* and *Bharata*.⁸³ On the other side, his mental sons are *Prajāpatis*, also named as *Dakṣu*, *Martci*, *Atri*, *Pulastya*, *Pulaha*, *Kratu*, *Vasiṣṭha*, *Gautama*, *Bhṛgu*, *Āṅgiras* and *Manu*.⁸⁴ Had there been any distinction between these two types of creation, no similarity, whatsoever, could be established. But the case is different. This is quite clear from the above observations. *Dakṣa* and *Dharma* are said to be the physical sons of *Brahmā*. At the same time, they are reckoned among the mental sons of *Brahmā*. This observation leads us to believe that there is no real distinction between the two.

Brahmā is above the world and so are his real sons. We are also his sons, but not the real sons. Thus, his real sons and we are not the same. *Brahmā*'s creation sprang up as a result of physical union (*Maithuna*), which is squarely a symbolic. We have seen earlier that when *Brahmā* married *Sarasvatī* and enjoyed her company, a son was born to them. He was named *Svāyambhuva Manu*. This *Manu* as the son of *Sarasvatī* or *Gāyatrī* or *Śatarūpā* or *Brahmāṇi*, actually, implies the principle of *Manas* or *Buddhi* including five *Tanmātras*, which are essential for the creation of the world; for *Manas*, *Buddhi* and *Tanmātras* are, sometimes, understood to be the seven sons of *Sarasvatī*.⁸⁵ But they may also be supposed to be her energy in the form of *Śraddhā*, *Ṛddhi*, *Kalā*, *Medhā*, *Tuṣṭi*, *Puṣṭi*, *Prabhā*, *Matī*, *Oṅkāra*, etc.⁸⁶ Mind and individual cannot be separated from each other. It is for this reason that there is complete identity between them. Similarly, some other names, which are similar to that of the energy of *Sarasvatī* as shown above, have got identified with *Sarasvatī*. They are *Puṣṭi*, *Dhṛti*, *Kīrti*, *Siddhi*, *Kānti*, *Kṣamā*, *Svadhā*, *Svāhā* and *Vāṇi*.⁸⁷

Thus, *Śraddhā*, *Ṛddhi*, *Kalā*, *Medhā*, etc., are the mental qualities of *Sarasvatī* and they symbolise her mind. Similarly, *Svāyambhuva*

⁸³Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 35

⁸⁴MP., CLXXI, 20-28

⁸⁵Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 53

⁸⁶GarP., I. 7.9

⁸⁷VāmP., XL. 15-16

Manu as the offspring of Brahmā, represents Mind or Intellect of Brahmā. His progeny is the place for the very manifestation of that principle of intellect. The *Purāṇas* often tell us that all the *Vedas* were produced by Brahmā and Sarasvatī. The *Vedas* are the store of knowledge and knowledge is the very product of mind. If Svāyambhuva Manu is the Mind of Brahmā, he is the *Veda*. Similar view may also be held with Sarasvatī. In a broader sense, Svāyambhuva Manu may be said to represent the *Vedas* proper.⁸⁸

The identification of the *Mānasī* and the *Maithunī Sṛṣṭis* gains ground on another observation. We will see further that Brahmā produced Ṛṣis, Prajāpatis and others from his mind. Therefore, they were his mind-born sons; but another account of the *Padma-Purāṇa* says that Śatarūpā (Sarasvatī), the wife of Brahmā, on the basis of the *Maithunī* principle, produced several Ṛṣis, Prajāpatis and others;⁸⁹ hence the identification of the *Maithunī* and the *Mānasī Sṛṣṭis*.

A brief description of the *mānas*-sons of Brahmā is given below :

(i) Ten Mind-born Sons of Brahmā

The *Matsya-Purāṇa* says that Brahmā produced various objects from the various parts of his body. The head is supposed to be the supreme of the body. He, therefore, created all the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* from his mouth.⁹⁰ In the head, mind sits as a king to rule over all the organs of the body, in the manner, a king rules over his subjects and looks after them like his children. Similarly, mind of Brahmā produced ten sons. They are Marīci, Atri, Aṅgiras, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Pracetas, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu and Nārada.⁹¹ As Brahmā was not satisfied with the creation of his mind-born sons; he, therefore, created Sāvitrī from the half portion of his body.⁹²

(ii) Eight Mind-born Sons of Brahmā

According to the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, Brahmā produced eight sons, whose

⁸⁸Cf. Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 15; see also James Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VI (London) p. 290: "Matter is the shadow; mind is the reality and mind is god."

⁸⁹*PdP.*, V. 16.10-12

⁹⁰*MP.*, III. 2-4

⁹¹*Ibid.*, III. 5-8

⁹²*Ibid.*, III. 30-32

name are Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras, Marici, Atri, Vasiṣṭha, Pulastya, Pulaha, and Kratu.⁹³ In the *Purāṇas*, Brahmā is popularly known as Pitāmaha. This Pitāmaha has become a common epithet for him. As these Ṛṣis were born to Pitāmaha, they are largely known as 'Pitāmaharṣis'.

(iii) Seven Mind-born Sons of Brahmā

In the *Mahābhārata*, instead of ten or eight, Brahmā's sons are said to number seven. They are Sana, Sanatsujāta, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumāra, Kapila and Sanātana.⁹⁴ In the *Harivaṃśa-Purāṇa*, too, they are said to be seven, namely, Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana, Sanatkumāra, Skanda, Nārada and Rudra.⁹⁵

(iv) Six Mind-born Sons of Brahmā

According to the *Mahābhārata*, six grand hermits named-Marici, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha and Kratu were born from the mind of Brahmā.⁹⁶

(v) Four Mind-born Sons of Brahmā

In the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, these (sons) are said to be four in number, i.e., Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra.⁹⁷

(vi) Prajāpatis as Sons of Brahmā

In the *Purāṇas*, there are a number of epithets for Brahmā; and Prajāpati⁹⁸ is one of them. Brahmā as Kāryabrahma, created the world and beings—living and non-living. He is their Lord (*Patī*). Therefore, he came to be known as Prajāpati (Lord of progeny-*Prajāḥ*). Thus, Brahmā is Prajāpati; but his mind-born sons are also

⁹³VP., IX. 68-69

⁹⁴MBhŚP., CCCXXVII. 64-66

⁹⁵HVP., I. 1. 34-37

⁹⁶MBhĀP., LXV. 10

⁹⁷BhāP., II. 7.5; III. 12.4; IV. 8.; BvP., I. 22-27

⁹⁸See further Chapter "Names, Epithets and Attributes of Brahmā".

collectively called Prajāpatīs; for Brahmā wanted that his sons should generate their offsprings for the expansion of the world. Thus, his sons also came to be styled as Prajāpatīs (Lords of progeny=*Prajāh*). This very idea is worked out in a verse of the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*:⁹⁹

lokasya santānakarāstairimā vardhitāḥ prajāḥ !
prajāpataya ityevaṃ paṭhyante brahmaṇaḥ sutāḥ !!

In the world, a king, who looks after his subjects well, is generally called Prajāpati. In a family, a man, who has a number of offsprings, is known to be Prajāpati. Similarly, the sons of Brahmā were created for progeny, meant for the onwards transmission of the world¹⁰⁰ and they were named as Prajāpatīs. In a *Mantra* of the *Rgveda*, a god named Prajāpati, has been invoked by devouts to grant progeny (*Prajām*). On account of this boon one could get from him, he is also entitled to be designated as Prajāpati.¹⁰¹ The personality of Vedic Prajāpati has merged into the personality of the *Purāṇic* god Brahmā; therefore, *Purāṇic* Brahmā is also called Prajāpati. Prajāpati Hiranyagarbha, Sṛṣṭikartā, etc., are the other *Purāṇic* names for Brahmā.¹⁰² This *Purāṇic* Brahmā himself is called Prajāpati and so are called his sons. But his sons gradually grew to a great number, therefore, the —(*VP.*, 'Prajāpatīs' became a common name for them ('*Prajāpatayaḥ*' use of *LXV.* 48).

The number of these Prajāpatīs differs from one *Purāṇa* to another. A few *Purāṇas* are referred to here.

(A) The Vāyu and the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas

According to these *Purāṇas*, the number of Prajāpatīs is seventeen. They are Kardama, Kaśyapa, Śeṣa, Vikrānta, Suśravas, Bahuputra, Kumāra, Vivasvat, Ariṣṭanemi, Bahula, Kuśocaya, Vālakhilya, Sambhūta, Paramarṣaya, Manojava, Sarvagata and Sarvabhoga.¹⁰³

⁹⁹*VP.*, *LXV.* 48

¹⁰⁰See this Chapter further on Genealogy.

¹⁰¹*Cf. RV.*, X. 85. 44; See also *Ibid.*, X. 184

¹⁰²*MP.*, *CCXLVIII.* 1

¹⁰³*VP.*, *LXV.* 48; *BrP.*, II. 9.21, 3.1

(B) The *Matsya-Purāṇa*

This *Purāṇa* assigns them to be eight such as Gautama, Hastīndra, Sukṛta, Mūrti, Ap, Jyoti, Tryaya and Smaya.¹⁰⁴ These Prajāpatis are said to have been born in the *Svāyambhuva Manvantara*. But, at another place, the same *Purāṇa* states that when *Brahmā* got married to Śatarūpā, he lost the very virtue of his penance (*Tapasyā*). He, therefore, observed the principle of mortification and created his wife of equal qualities and capable of the creation of the world, out of half of his body. Afterwards, *Brahmā* recited the *Gāyatrī* and created some Prajāpatis like Viśveśa, Dharma, Dakṣa, Marīci, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Gautama, Bhṛgu, Aṅgiras and Manu.¹⁰⁵ According to this enumeration, they are twelve in number.

(C) The *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*

In the *Garuḍa-Purāṇa*, they form a galaxy of fourteen *Devas*, namely, Dharma, Rudra, Manu, Sanaka, Sanātana, Sanatkumār, Ruci, Śraddhā, Pitara, Barhiṣada, Agniṣvāta, Kāvyaḍāna, Dipyāna and Ājñapāna.¹⁰⁶ In this group of Prajāpatis, many new names are added.

(D) The *Mahābhārata*

In this magnum opus epic, two main reckonings are made in the present context. According to one, Prajāpatis are twenty-one. They are *Brahmā*, Rudra, Manu, Dakṣa, Bhṛgu, Dharma, Tapa, Yama, Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Parameṣṭhin, Sūrya, Candra, Kardama, Krodha and Vikṛita.¹⁰⁷ But, according to another record,¹⁰⁸ their number has substantially gone up above thirty. They are Rudra, Bhṛgu, Dharma, Tapa, Yama, Marīci, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Vasiṣṭha, Candramas,

¹⁰⁴ *MP.*, IX. 9-10; *CLXVI*. 27

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, *LCXXI*. 20-28

¹⁰⁶ *GarP.*, 1.5

¹⁰⁷ See Vettam Mani, *op cit.*, p. 599

¹⁰⁸ *MBhSP.*, XI. 14; *BhāP.* III. 12.21

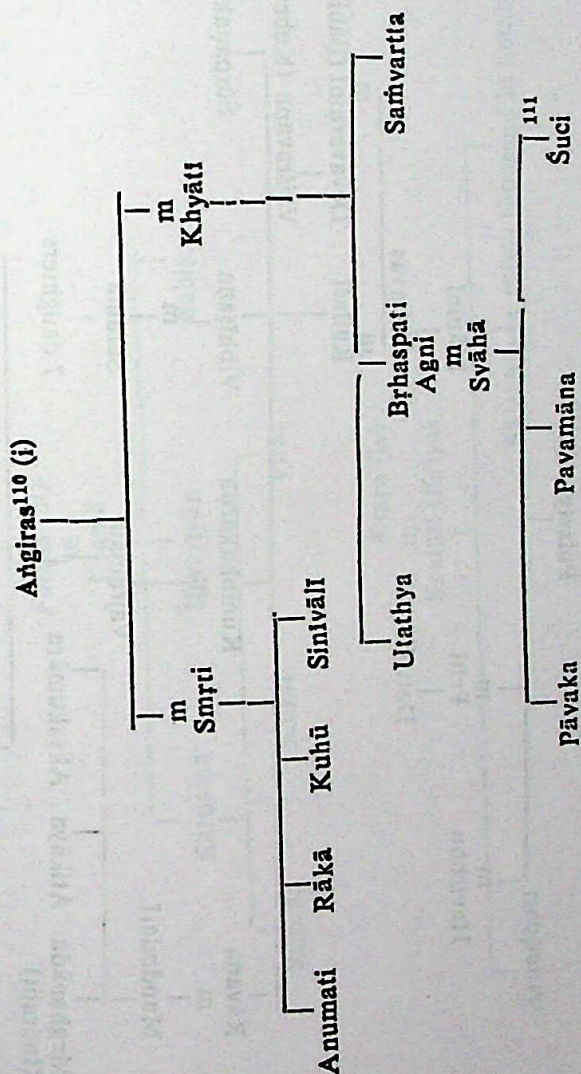
Krodha, Vikṛita, Bṛhaspati, Sthāṇu, Manu, Ka, Parameṣṭhin, Dakṣa, Sapta Putra, Kaśyapa, Kardama, Prahlāda, Sanātana, Prācinabarhi, Dakṣa Prācetas, Soma, Aryaman, Śaśabinduputra and Gautama.

(E) Purāṇic Encyclopaedia¹⁰⁹

It shows Prajāpatis in detail as such: Kaśyapa, Svāyambhuva Manu, Dharma, Adharma, Praheti, Heti, Vasiṣṭha, Bhṛgu, Marīci, Ariṣṭanemi, Vivasvān, Dakṣa, Pracetas, Sthāṇu, Saṁśraya, Seṣa, Vikṛita, Kardama, Kratu, Pulaha, Pulastya, Atri and Aṅgiras. Thus, this genealogy is shown in the following page. At the beginning, while dealing with the *Mānasī Śṛṣṭi* of Brahmā, it has been said that Brahmā, first of all, produced the *Vedas* and the *Śāstras* from his mouth. Later on, he created his mind-born sons to carry on the responsibility of the creation. But his sons did not show any interest in the creation. Here, naturally, a question arises that when they were indifferent, how did their genealogy proceed. Here, we may say that like Brahmā, they did not create that type of the *Śṛṣṭi*, which is said to be of many kinds; but they produced sons of their own kinds—called hermits of high sanctity and grandeur. Had they not done this, a long chain of *Rṣis* could have ceased and knowledge gone; but their genealogy saved the said chain. In the *Rgveda*, there are many *Rṣis*, whose families flourished to such an extent that later on, many descendants took their birth in different families. *Rṣis* as such were not assigned to create the world except that they transmitted their knowledge simply from one generation to another. Similar view holds good for the *Purāṇic* Prajāpatis; for Brahmā begot them from his mind. The genealogy of some of them, according to the *Purāṇic Encyclopaedia*, is shown as under:

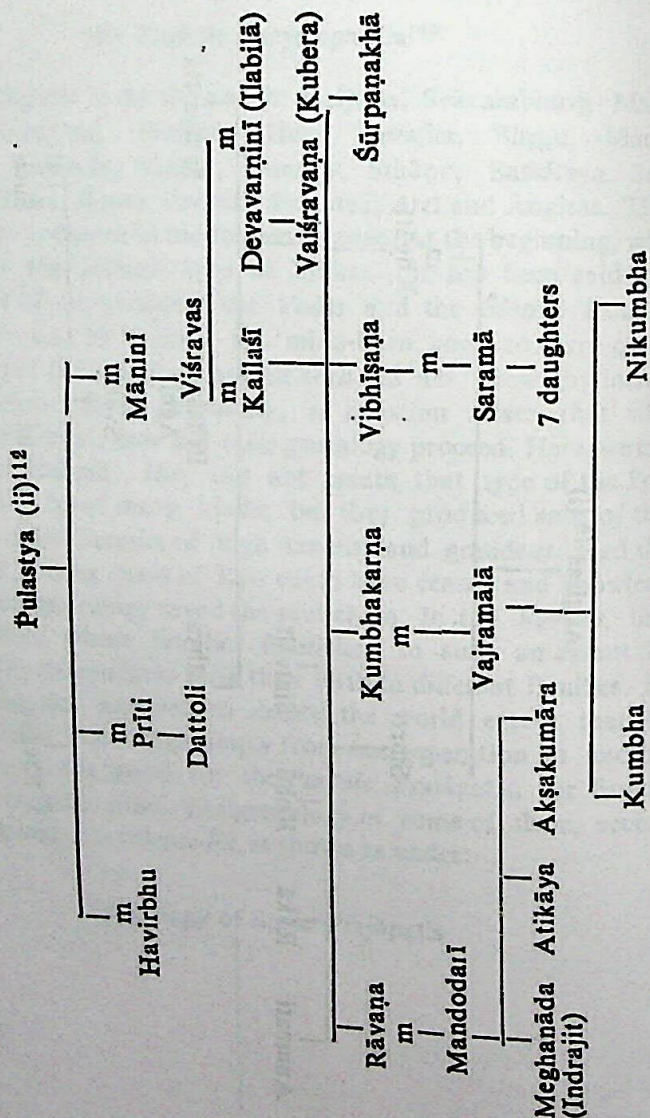
Genealogy of Some Prajāpatis

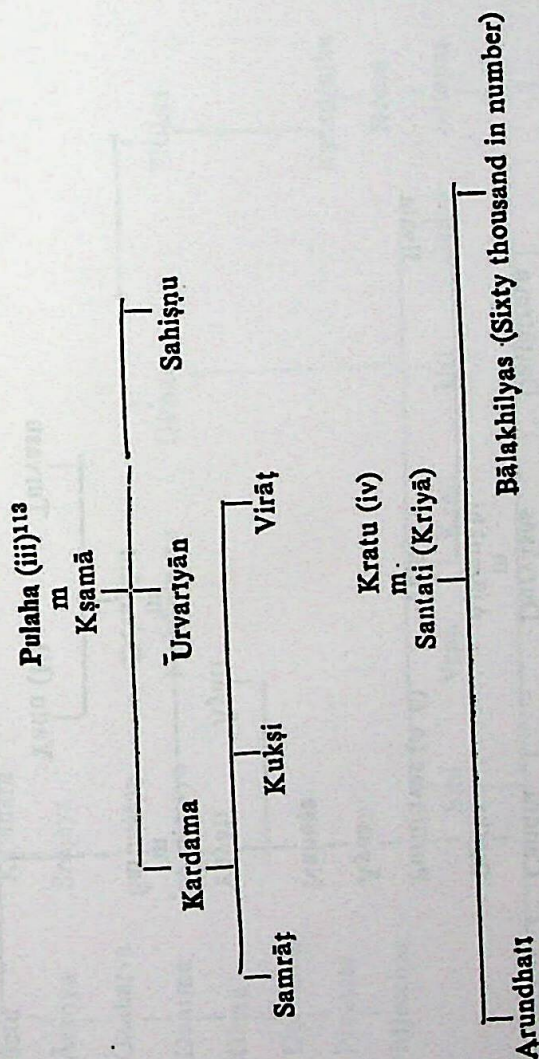
¹⁰⁹Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 901



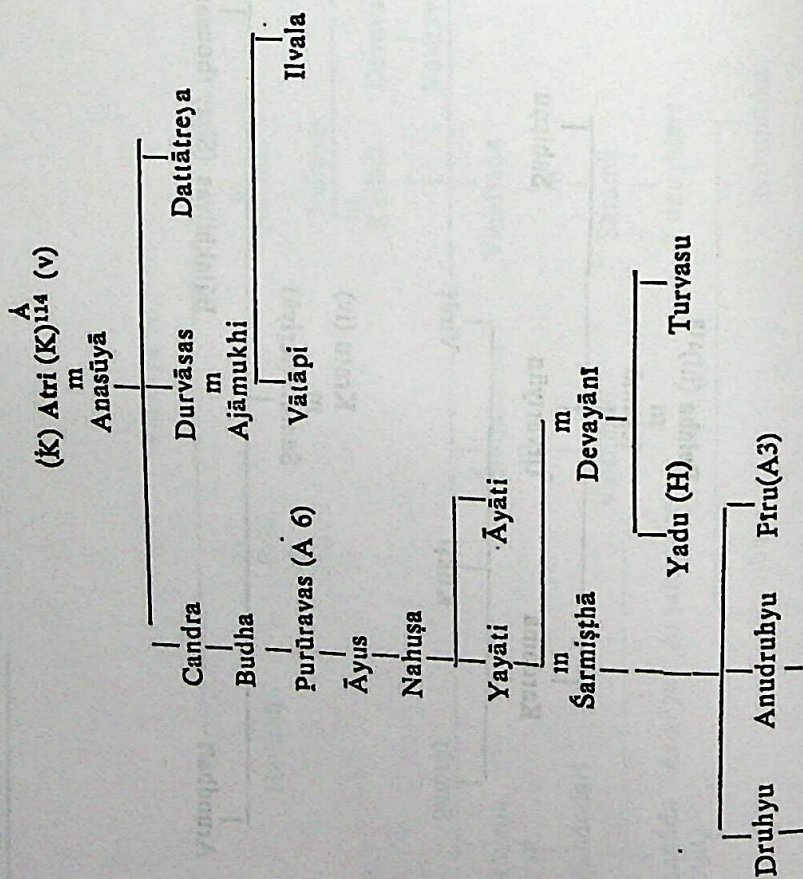
¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 901 ff.

¹¹¹ See the genealogy of Aṅgiras *MP.*, CLXLVI.

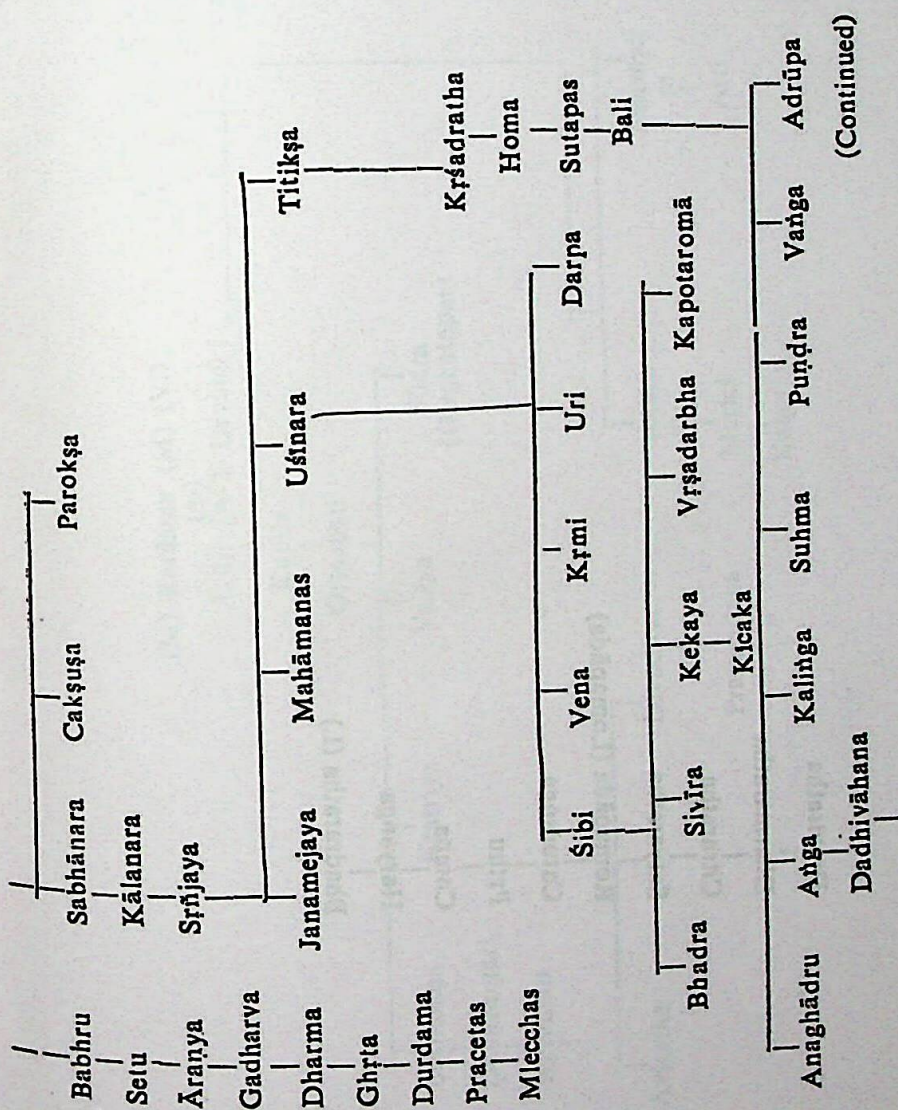
¹¹² See also the family of Pulastya MP., CC II.



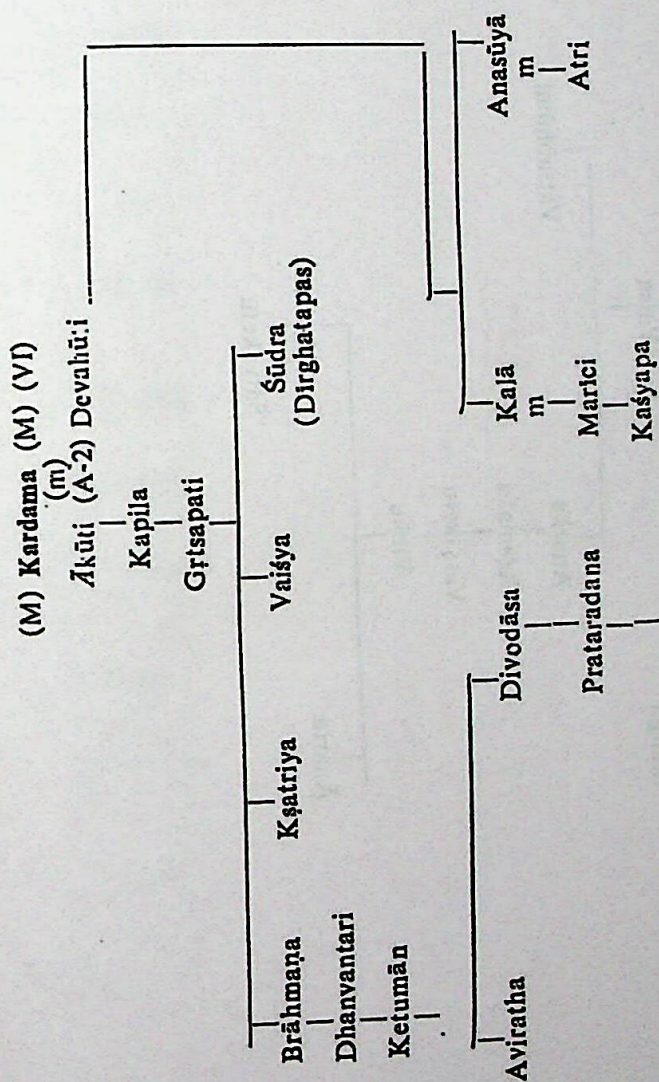
¹¹³See also the family of Pulahya *MP.*, CCII.

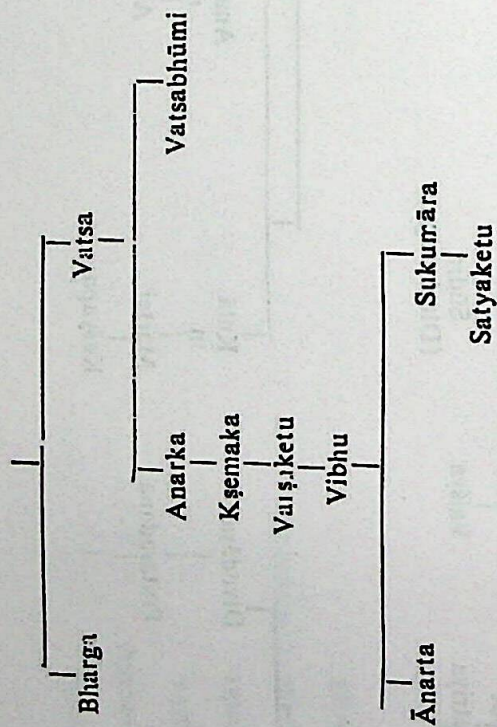


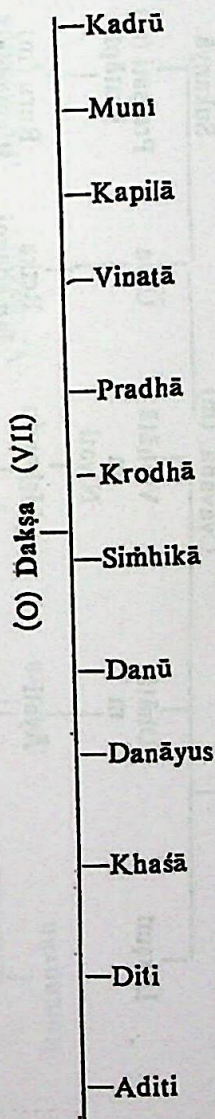
¹¹⁴ See also the family of Atri MP., CLXXXXVII.

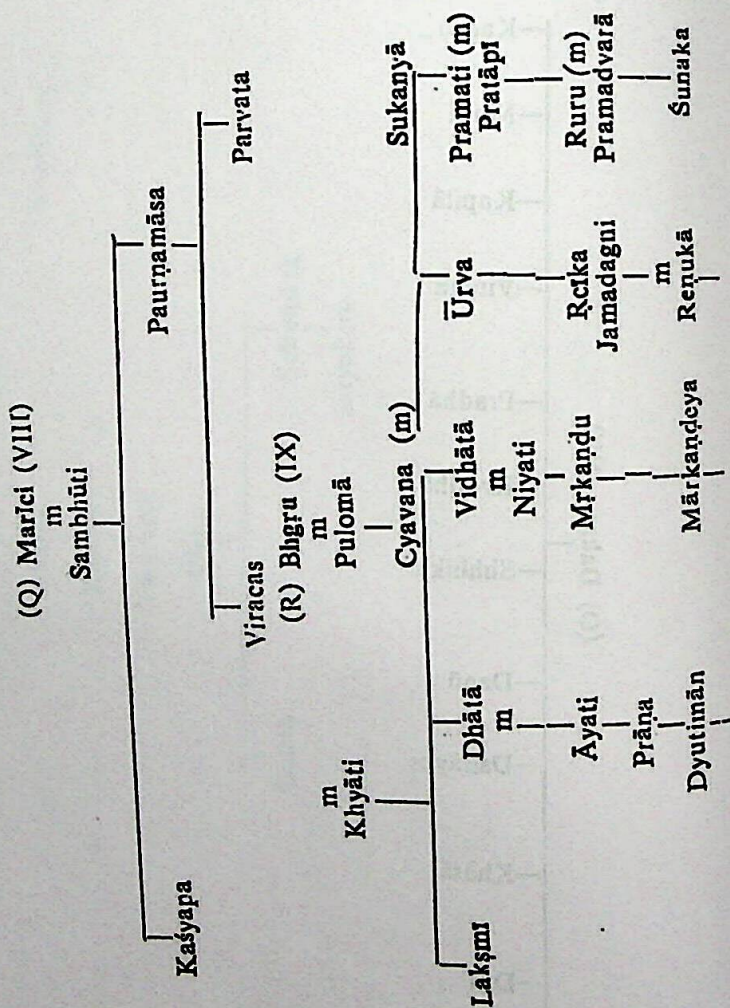


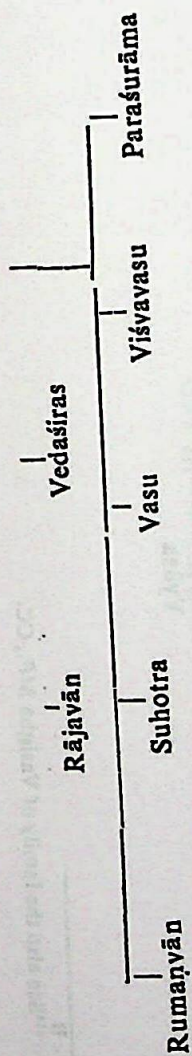
— Draviratha
 — Dharmaratha
 — Citraratha
 — Satyaratha
 — Romapāda (Lomapāda)
 — Caturanga
 — Prthu
 — Campa
 — Haryanga
 — Bhadraratha (L)

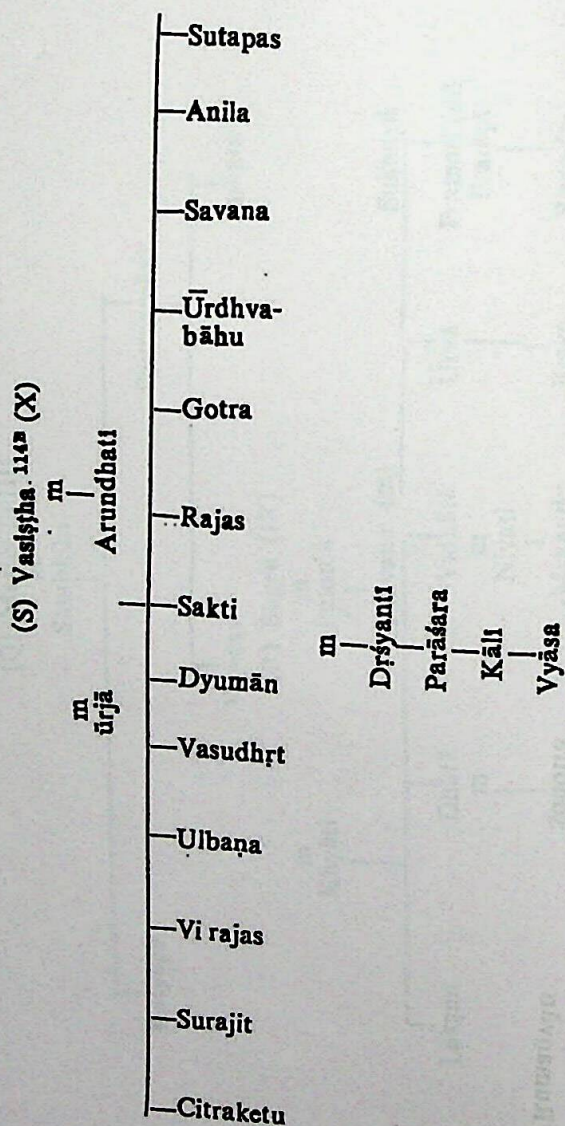




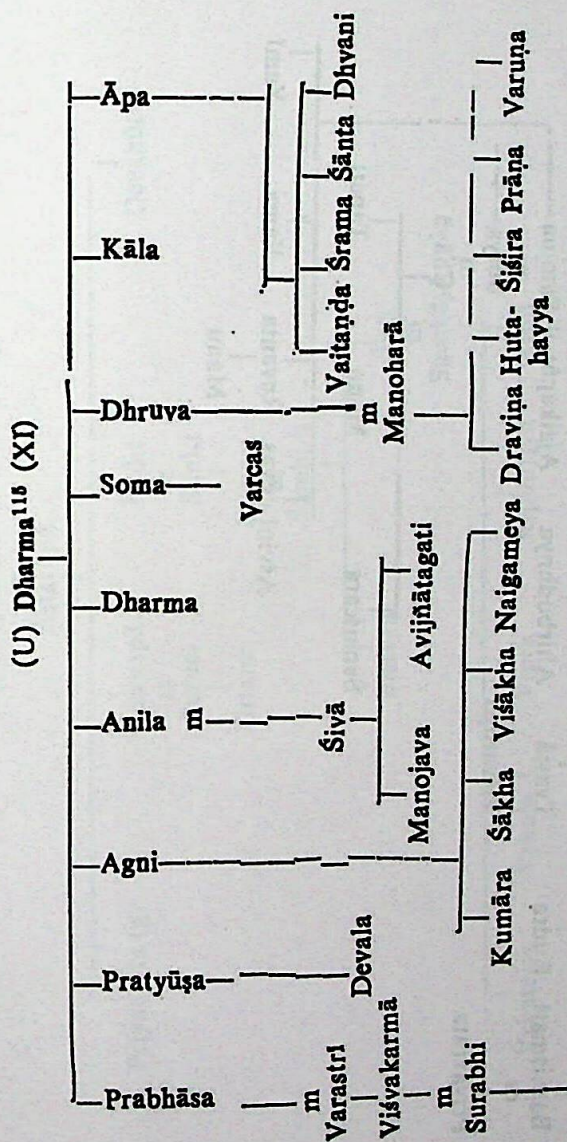




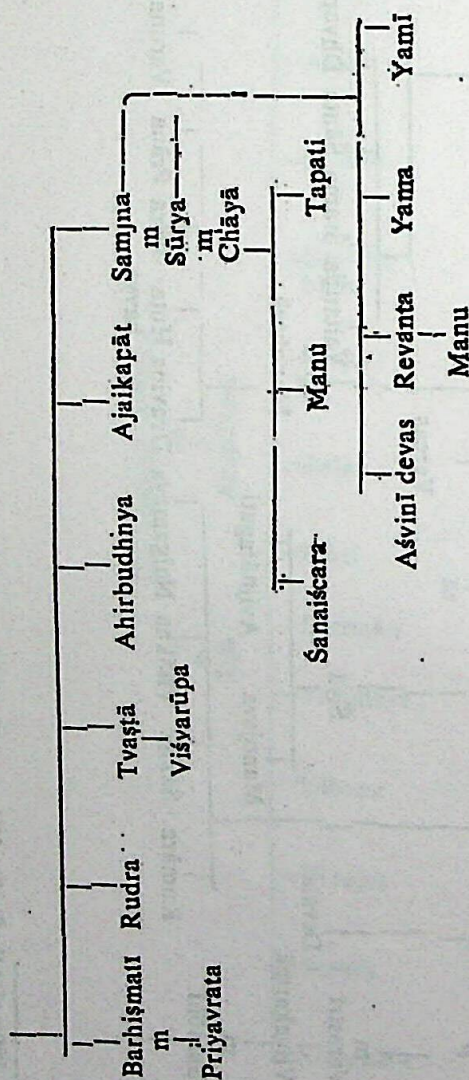




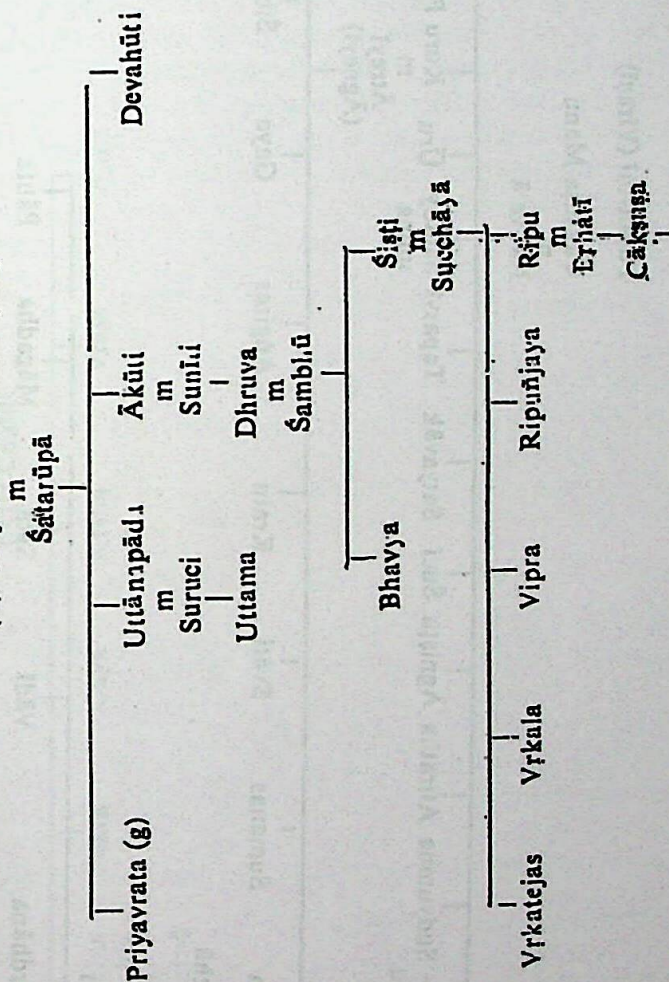
^B See also the family of Vasīṣṭha MP., CC.

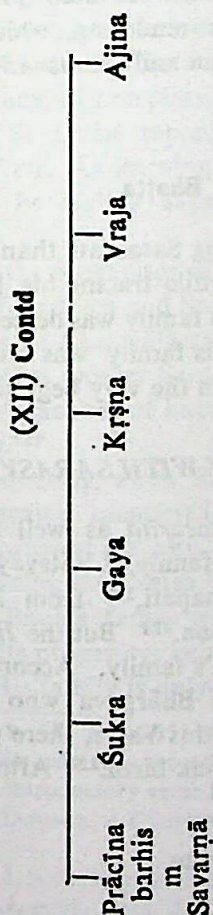


¹¹⁵See also the family of DharmaMP., CCIII.



(V) Svayambhuva Manu (XII)





Many other Prajāpatis, their offsprings and genealogies have been shown at the end of the Purāṇic Encyclopaedia referred to earlier. Among those genealogies, only a few prominent genealogies have been shown on the foregoing pages. Among Prajāpatis, some have been assigned their consorts and offsprings. Again, among Prajāpatis, some names are akin to the mortal beings, whom we know through the history or long tradition. It is possible that some enthusiasts or mortal beings, owing to vanity caused by extreme success, could have shown their connection with the descendants of these Prajāpatis as Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa has done. However, Bāṇa's rendering, which is well-knitted with the theme-threads of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, deserves notice. It is as follows.

The Legend of Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa

Bāṇa offers us with more material regarding Sarasvatī than any other classical writer. In the *Harṣacarita*,¹¹⁶ while tracing his lineage to Sarasvatī, he describes her in detail how his family was descended from her. In the *Kādambarī*, he tells us that his family was favoured by Sarasvatī and was devoted to learning from the very beginning.¹¹⁷

1. THE RELATION OF BĀṆA'S FAMILY WITH SARASVATĪ

Bāṇa describes his family in the *Harṣacarita* as well as in the *Kādambarī*. According to the latter, in the family of Vātsyāyana, there took birth Kubera,¹¹⁸ from Kubera, Arthapati,¹¹⁹ from Arthapati, Citrabhānu¹²⁰ and from Citrabhānu, Bāṇa.¹²¹ But the *Harṣacarita* furnishes a more detailed account of Bāṇa's family. According to it, there was a Brahmin born in the family of Bhārgava who got Vatsa as his son by his wife Akṣamālā.¹²² From this Vatsa, there proceeded a great family wherein sage Vātsyāyana took birth.¹²³ After a consi-

¹¹⁶Vide HC., I. 61 ff.

¹¹⁷Cf. *Kād.*, introductory verses 11-12, 14, 16, 19-20

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, 10

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, 13

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, 16

¹²¹*Ibid.*, 19

¹²²HC., p. 62, lines 1-6

¹²³*Ibid.*, p. 63, lines 1-17

derable lapse of time, Kubera took birth in this family, who in turn, had four sons, namely, Acyuta, Īśāna, Hara and Pāśupata. Of them, Pāśupata had Arthapati as his son, who in turn had eleven sons, namely, Bhṛgu, Haṁsa, Śuci, Kavi, Mahidatta, Dharma, Jātavedas, Citrabhānu, Tryakṣa, Mahidatta and Viśvarūpa. It was Citrabhānu, who was Bāṇa's father.¹²⁴

The family of Bāṇa was highly graced by Sarasvatī, which is obvious from a few evidences. Bāṇa writes that his ancestor Kubera was earnestly devoted to the *Vedas*, sacrifices and other Śāstras and Sarasvatī always resided in his mouth.¹²⁵ He was a great performer of the sacrifices and Sarasvatī herself took it as a pleasure to wipe out the beads of perspiration caused during their performance.¹²⁶ Actually, Sarasvatī represents the *Vedas*, all type of learning, art, science,¹²⁷ etc. As learning flourished at the hands of the forefathers of Bāṇa, he rightly says that they were especially favoured by Sarasvatī.

Vatsa, the progenitor of Bāṇa's family, was the cousin of Sārasvata, the son of Dadhīca and Sarasvatī. They were born simultaneously—the former to Akṣamālā and the latter to Sārasvatī.¹²⁸ Sārasvata was blessed by his mother Sarasvatī with the knowledge of all the Śāstras and other branches of knowledge along with the esoteric meanings of the *Vedas*.¹²⁹

Consequently, when Sārasvata grew up, all the blessings of his mother became manifest in him automatically. He and Vatsa were not only cousins; but also bosom-friends. He, therefore, infused the entire learning into Vatsa.¹³⁰

Thus, Bāṇa's family was from the very beginning blessed with learning, its progenitor being in close relation with the son of Sarasvatī herself. His family is duly praised for its profound learning.¹³¹ In the

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64, lines 1-11

¹²⁵ *Kād.*, introductory verse 11

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, introductory verse 19

¹²⁷ John Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London, 1961), p. 284

¹²⁸ *HC.*, I, p. 61, lines 1—p. 62, line 6

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, I, p. 61, lines 2-4. "...samyaksarahasyāḥ sarve vedāḥ sarvāṇi ca śāstrāṇi sakalāś ca kalā mat.prabhāvāt svayam āvirbhaviṣyanti, iti varam adāt".

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, I, p. 62, lines 7-9, "atha sārasvato mātur mahimnā yauvanā-rambha eva "virbhūtāś-avidyāśambhāras tasmin savayasi bhrātari preyasi prāṇasame suhrdī vaste vāṇmayam samastam eva sañcārayāmāsa".

¹³¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63, lines 1-17 : *Kād.*, introductory verses 10-19

Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, Sarasvatī is closely related to the Brāhmaṇas living by the Sarasvatī river.¹³²

2. BĀṆA'S VERSION OF THE LEGEND OF SARASVATĪ

Bāṇa establishes matrimonial relation between Sarasvatī and Dadhica. The latter is described as the son of Cyavana Ṛṣi and Sukanyā, the daughter of King Śaryāta. The father of Dadhica was a Ṛṣi and has been described as practising penance at a distance of four miles from the Śoṇa.¹³³ It is from this Dadhica that Sārasvata, the cousin of Vatsa and the progenitor of the family of Bāṇa, was born.¹³⁴

The legend concerning Sarasvatī in the *Harṣacarita* is as follows. Sarasvatī was the daughter of Brahmā, residing in the heaven (*Brahmaloka*). Once while Brahmā was sitting encircled by gods and discussion on a certain *Vidyā* was going on, there arose a controversy owing to difference of opinion.¹³⁵ Meanwhile, Durvāsā quarrelled with another Ṛṣi called Upamanyu and everpowered by wrath over the latter, he struck a discordant note of the *Sāman*. After hearing it, all held their tongues; but Sarasvatī could not restrain herself from laughing at him for the mistake.¹³⁶ Seeing Sarasvatī laughing at him, Durvāsā punished her with the curse to descend to the earth.¹³⁷ Here, Durvāsā does not specify the period of the curse. Brahmā came forward with a word of consolation to his daughter and limited the curse on Sarasvatī to live on the earth only up to the birth of a son.¹³⁸

The day following the curse, Sarasvatī, accompanied by Sāvitrī, set out for the earth.¹³⁹ Following the path of the *Mandākinī*, she got down to the earth and according to the advice of Sāvitrī, settled down

¹³² MBh.ŚP., L 11.2-51; cf BdP., II. 16. 62; MP., CXIV. 50; AR. Vol. VII, p. 219

¹³³ HC., p. 41, lines 9-25, "nījatejahprasarapluta pulomnaś cyavanasya bahīrvṛtījivitaṁ dadhico nāma tanayaḥ, janany apy asya... śaryātasya sutā... sukanjā nāme... itaś ca gavjūlīmātram iva pāreṣaṇaṁ tasya bhagavataś cavanasya... cyāvanam nāma caitrarathakalpaṁ kṛnānaṁ nivāsaḥ".

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 61, line 1—p. 62, line 6

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 10, lines 1—8

¹³⁶ Ibid., p. 11, line 1—p. 12, line 14

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 18, lines 2-3. "durvinīte, vyapanayāmi te vidyājanitāṁ unnatim imāṁ, adhaśtād gaccha martyalokam".

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 19, lines 12-15, "...vatse sarasvatī, mā gāḥ... ātmajamukhakamalāvalokanāvadhīś ca te śāpo 'yaṁ bhaviṣyati iti".

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 28, lines 4-14

on the western bank of the *Śoṇa*, also called the *Hiraṇyavāha*¹⁴⁰. At the banks of the *Śoṇa*, they began to pass their days in their daily duties.¹⁴¹

One day, Dadhīca, who was born at the house of his maternal grandfather and who had attained youth, was going to his father's hermitage. While on his way, he chanced to come to the abode of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī. He saw Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī and later on, set out for his father's hermitage.¹⁴² After some days, Dadhīca sent his messenger called Mālatī to Sarasvatī to communicate his love-message to her.¹⁴³ Afterwards, this acquaintance resulted in the establishment of conjugal relation. Dadhīca spent a period of more than a year like a day in the company of Sarasvatī, residing at the bank of the *Śoṇa*.¹⁴⁴ Sarasvatī conceived and in due course, gave birth to Sārasvata. After the birth of Sārasvata, she returned to the heaven¹⁴⁵; for Brahmā had limited the curse of Durvāsā to live on the earth till the birth of a son.¹⁴⁶ But when Dadhīca was separated from Sarasvatī, he found it difficult to maintain the worldly life and, therefore, giving up worldly affairs, he returned to the forest to lead an aescetic life.¹⁴⁷ This is the detailed account of the legend of Sarasvatī and Dadhīca as put forth by Bāṇa.

3. PROBABLE SOURCE OF THE LEGEND

This legend does not find any parallel in the *Vedas* and the *Brāhmaṇas*. Bāṇa appears to have taken the legend from the *Mahābhārata* and the *Purāṇas* and to have developed and connected it with his family in his own way.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 29, line 1-p. 30, line 17

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 30, lines 17 ff.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 40, line 1-p. 45, line 7

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 51, line 1-p. 56, line 23

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 58, line 1-p. 60, line 12

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 61, lines 1-5

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 19, lines 14-15

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61, line 5-p. 62, line 3, "gatāyām ca tasyām dadhīco 'pi hṛdaye brāhṇīnye 'vā 'bhihato...virahāturas tapase vanam agāi".

(A) Sarasvatī-legend in the Mahābhārata

We happen to observe that Sarasvatī had a son called Sārasvata. This Sārasvata preserved the knowledge of the *Vedas* during the period of drought and when it was over, he imparted the knowledge to 60,000 Brāhmaṇas, who flocked to him for gaining it.¹⁴⁸ Bāṇa seems to have taken the theme of the legend and have moulded it according to his purpose; for he makes Sārasvata transfer to Vatsa the entire knowledge, given to him by his mother Sarasvatī,¹⁴⁹ and this knowledge was enhanced with the advancement of the family of Vatsa.¹⁵⁰

(B) Sarasvatī-legend in the Purāṇas

It is also feasible that Bāṇa is indebted to a certain extent to the *Purāṇas*. In some of the *Purāṇas*, there are clear references to Sārasvata as being the son of Sarasvatī from Dadhīca. The *Vāyu-Purāṇa* states:

“sārasvataḥ sarasvatyām dadhīcāc co'padadyate.”¹⁵¹ Similarly, the *Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa* reads: “sārasvataḥ sarasvatyām dadhīcasyo-dapadyat.”¹⁵²

The parentage of Sārasvata in Bāṇa's version of the legend is the same as the one found in the above *Purāṇas*. But in spite of this, there is a little discrepancy. Bāṇa, in his *Harṣacarita*, takes Dadhīca to be the son of a Ṛṣi called Cyavana;¹⁵³ but the *Purāṇas* are silent over parentage. The descent of Sarasvatī either as a river or as a goddess to the earth has been admitted at different places. The coming down of the river Sarasvatī to the earth has a similitude in the Gaṅgā's being brought down on the earth by Bhagīratha. Similarly, in the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī has been described to have been asked by God Viṣṇu to descend on the earth in order to subdue the marine fire of the oceans.¹⁵⁴ According to another account, she was cursed

¹⁴⁸Mold Israil Khan, *op. cit.*, pp. 146-148

¹⁴⁹HC., p. 61, line 1-p. 62, line 6

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 63 ff; also cf. *Kād.*, introductory verses 10-19

¹⁵¹VP., LXV. 91

¹⁵²BdP., III. 1.94

¹⁵³HC., p. 41, lines 6-10

¹⁵⁴SkP., VII. 33.13-15

by Gzṅgā, one of the wives of Hari, to become a river and to go down to the earth.¹⁵⁵ Bāṇa makes Sarasvatī descend on the earth owing to the curse of Durvāsā¹⁵⁶ and describes her to be the wife of a mortal man, called Dadhica.¹⁵⁷ He describes Sarasvatī as residing on the bank of the *Soṇa*,¹⁵⁸ a fact which is found in the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵For details see *BrP.*, II. 6.17-40, 41-53, etc.

¹⁵⁶*HC.*, p. 10, line 1-p. 18, line 4

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 60, lines 1-12

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 29, line 1-p. 30, line 17

¹⁵⁹*BhāP.*, V. 19. 18

CHAPTER-4

THE PURĀNIC EPISODE, COLOUR AND VEHICLE OF BRAHMĀ

THIS episode has fully developed in the *Purāṇas*. Though its exposition is vague there, yet it has its own characteristics and has been referred to several times. This account is being shown briefly as under :

Brahmā and Sarasvatī

The marriage between Brahmā and Sarasvatī, though allegorical, has been mentioned several times in some of the *Purāṇas*. Brahmā has been shown there closely associated with Sarasvatī. His engagement with the latter is really very remarkable. The *Matsya Purāṇa* has far more to say on this point than the other *Purāṇas*. According to it, Sarasvatī was born out of the half-portion of Brahmā's body as his daughter. But when he looked at her, he was fired by her peerless beauty and praised her for it incessantly: "Oh ! what an enchanting form." "Oh ! what an enchanting form." This all he said in the presence of his mind-born sons (*mānas-putras*), which caused shame to his daughter, who with great remorse, began to circumambulate her such bare-faced father. But, when she was circumambulating him, Brahmā found it troublesome to move again and again with her. He, therefore, became four-faced to have a full and continuous glance at her; and, finally, five-faced, when she proceeded to the heaven. Ultimately, Brahmā entrusted to his sons, the work of creation and married her, who was of hundred beauties (*Śatarupā*). Thus, he

enjoyed the company of Sarasvatī for hundred years, living inside the lotus-temple.¹

From this *Purāṇa*, it is not clear as to how Brahmā, in spite of the unwillingness of Sarasvatī, won her as his wife. But the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* clarifies this point to some extent. It says that Sarasvatī was quite devoid of passion, when Brahmā fell under the irresistible influence of love. He had to win over the heart of his daughter.²

When Brahmā married Sarasvatī, he lost the very virtue of his *Tapasyā*. He therefore, had to practise hard penance. It is due to this *Tapasyā* that he begot his wife from half of his body.³ She was gifted with the faculty of creation. This consort of Brahmā was beauty incarnate and stood by her husband as *Surabhi*. Brahmā enjoyed her company and out of his union with her, a smoke coloured progeny was born⁴. Here, it is not the clear reference to his wife by name and, most probably, Sāvitrī seems to be referred to as it is clear from the following. In the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, Sāvitrī has been mentioned as the wife of Brahmā and when the latter enjoyed her company, the *Vedas*, *Śāstras*, year, month, day, night, sunlight, dawn, etc., came into existence.⁵ In the *Purāṇas*, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī have been mentioned in different capacity. As Prakṛti, they stand side by side, hence are different⁶, whereas some other references present them as essentially one.⁷ Sometimes, they come before us as two different wives of Brahmā.

1. SOURCES OF THE EPISODE

(i) The Vedic Source

The seed of this episode is found in the *Rgveda* itself. A *mantra* refers to it as under :

¹MP., III, 30-43; *Vām P.*, XX VII. 5

²BhāP., III. 12.28

³MP., CLXXI. 20-23

⁴Ibid., CLXXI. 34-36

⁵BvP., I. 8. 1-9

⁶Ibid., II. 1.1; 4.4

⁷MP., III. 30-32

“mahe yat pitra im rasam dive karava tsarat prśanyaścikitvān !
srjadastā dhṛṣatā didyumasmai syāyām devo duhitari tviṣim
dhāt !!”⁸

Some other *Mantras* of the tenth *Maṇḍala*, are worth noticing. Of these, three are of capital importance. In the *Mantra* referred to above, the word ‘*Pitre*’ stands for the host of the gods, who reside in the heaven and the word ‘*Duhitari*’ is none-else than ‘*Dīpti*’ (*Prakāśa*). Sayanaċārya understands it : “*uṣaḥ kāle hi sūryakirṇāḥ prādurbhavanti.*” Plainly speaking, here is the description of the dawn and the sun which seems to us corporeal.

Let us see the sense underlying the consecutive *Mantras*, three in number, of the tenth *Maṇḍala*.⁹ Here, Rudra is said to be Rudra and he (*Rudra*) generates Rudra. The idea underlying here is not clear. So we may explain it as follows. Rudra is *Prajāpati* (the Lord of progeny) and Rudra produced by him is god. *Retas* stands for *Karma*. By dint of this *Karma*, Rudra produced is either the day or the dawn. This seems to refer to the earliest stage of the creation of the world and the beings. In the beginning, it was only *Prajāpati* and when he had the desire for creation, he created gods out of him with the help of his energy (*Śakti*). But before the creation rose up, it was out and out darkness. It is for this reason that he divided himself in many parts. These parts are none-else than gods and gods are none-else than *Prajāpati*. This is an accepted fact that there are twelve *Ādityas* and eleven *Rudras*. This division is more or less identical. Thus, Rudra and *Prajāpati* are one and gods are his progeny, which he produced in the lap of the day or the dawn. So long as there was darkness, nothing could emerge and the light was only capable of producing something. Symbolically, the day or the dawn is the very source of the things that come into existence.

This episode can be interpreted in a different way. The *Vedic* themes are very much shrouded with mysteries and are possessed of various meanings at a time ; hence a number of interpretations.

By the study of the *Vedic* lore, we come to know that we are born of the essence of various gods. To endorse it, we may quote the *Altareya-Upaniṣad*. It says that various gods live in various

⁸RV., I. 71.5

⁹Ibid., X. 61.5-7

regions in their gross forms; but they reside in our body in their subtle forms, *i.e.*, our gross body is represented by their atoms.¹⁰

If the word '*Duhitr*' is for the day or the dawn as *Sāyaṇa* understands, we may aptly interpret this in a different way. *Prajāpati* is the heavenly supreme god and, therefore, he would have created the heavenly gods first in the heaven, *divi √dyu*, meaning to shine and *diva* is one which shines incessantly). Taking the present discussion into account, we may say that *Prajāpati* would have inserted his *Retas* first in the far sky, where dawn resides before the day comes. The corporeal relationship and procreation thereby, the union of *Brahmā* and *Sarasvatī* in question, seems to refer to this phenomenon of Nature. This conclusion can be drawn on the study of the subject based on the naturalistic theory.

(ii) The Purāṇic Source

The *Purāṇas* have portrayed *Brahmā* and *Sarasvatī* as husband and wife (*Mithunau*). *Yāska* has taken *Mithuna* in two different senses—one in divine sense and the other in worldly sense. The Sun and the Dawn are in the first category and the husband and the wife in the second category. The episode of *Brahmā* and *Sarasvatī* is found in the *Purāṇas* and it has its parallel foundation in the *Vedic* literature as well. But it is astonishing to note that there is a vast difference in the sense underlying *Mithuna*, used both in the *Vedic* and the *Purāṇic* literature. For instance, *Yāska* takes the word in divine sense and says that when the sun along with a female co-born deity—called the dawn—was born, then the gods saw the whole world¹¹. This *Mithuna* is divine; it lives together and depends upon each other as the derivation of the word shows :

Mithuna √ *Mi* + *thu* + √ *ni* > *mithuna*
Mi + *th* + √ *van*

The meaning of *Mithuna*, in which, we take *Brahmā* and *Sarasvatī*, does not befit for several reasons. Firstly, the couple does not live together permanently. Secondly, this couple is not happy for long.

¹⁰Cf. *AU.*, I.2.4

¹¹*Niru*, VII. 29

Thirdly, this couple separated eventually contrary to the worldly Mithuna, who are full of sorrows and sufferings; but bound to live together. According to Yāska, this idea is also underlying the word Mithuna—mith + √van. Yāska says—*methatirākrośa—karmā*.

Contrary to Yāska's interpretation, we find different notions underlying Mithuna (*Dampati*), presently in vogue. They (*Dampati*) abide and lead life according to the wishes of each other. Usually, we find a complete harmony in the life of a couple (*Dampati*), of course, barring a few exceptions of disharmony. But in the *Purāṇas*, Brahmā and *Sarasvatī* have been portrayed differently; hence they cannot be taken as 'Mithuna' in the worldly sense. There was no harmony of desires; for Brahmā was enamoured of the matchless beauty of *Sarasvatī*; but the latter was calm and impassive. The *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa* has aptly observed :

*vācam duhitaram tanvīm syāmbhūrhariti manah !
akāmāṁ cakrame saktaḥ sakāma iti naḥ śrutam !!¹²*

(A) Conclusion

On general observations, we happen to see that there are many allegoric descriptions in the *Purāṇas*. Allegoric things require proper explanation from various view-points. To explain the thing in hand, we may cite some instances from other sources. In the *Rāmāyaṇa*, it is said that the queen Kauśalyā, at the time of *Putreṣṭhi*, had to sleep with a horse (*Aśva*) all night through. Horse (*Aśva*) is an animal; but besides its physical description, it is also used to symbolise energy.¹³ The queen actually did not enjoy the company of the horse; but played vividly with that energy or force, the horse stands for; when she was asleep at night. Similarly, in the *Purāṇas*, it is held that Indra as godly being, enjoyed the company of a mortal woman, called *Ahalyā-ahnā—yamynī, aho yamayanti vā sā, i.e.,* which is spent by the day or the night. The night is meant here. Gotama is the husband of *Ahalyā*. Let us see the connotation of Gotama along with Indra. Gotama symbolizes the dark rays emitting from the

¹² *BhāP.*, III. 12.28

¹³ Sri Aurobindo, *On the Veda* (Pondicherry, 1956), pp. 104-105

earth, Indra stands for the light (*Prakāśa*) and the moon for the two-winged bird. Thus, this phenomenon could be explained like this :

In the day, light pervades everywhere and, at the fall of the night, it goes upwards. So when the god of the light went up, he took the help of the moon, figuratively called bird. This episode still can be explained in a different manner. In the night (*Ahalyā*), Indra (light) is diffused through two-winged bird (moon) on the earth (*Gotama*).

In the foregoing lines, two instances have been cited so as to understand the episode of Brahmā and Sarasvatī. It seems that this episode is very much influenced by the *R̥gvedic* source, found in a *Mantra* :

“kāmastadagre samavartatādhi manaso retah prathamam
yadāsīt”¹⁴

In the beginning of the creation, Brahmā wanted to manifest himself in multifarious forms. His desire is termed '*Kāma*' and '*Kāma*' is the effect of *Manas* (mind)—a supreme and controlling power. In the *Vedas* and the *Purāṇas* mind is understood to be Prajāpati. The famous gnome that goes to the zenith of popularity in some of the *Brāhmaṇas* is : “*mano vai prajāpatiḥ*.” This very Prajāpati puts his *Retas* (*Kāma*) in *Vāk* (Sarasvatī) “*vāg vai sarasvatī*”. Sometimes, *Vāk* is identified with Prajāpati, Viśvakarman, the whole world and Indra.¹⁵ According to a legend, concerning creation, recorded in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa*, Prajāpati, desirous of creation, created *Vāk* (speech) out of his mind. Out of her, he created waters (*Āpaḥ*). Here, a sexual indu'gence between the two is shown explicitly.¹⁶ In the *Kāthaka-Upaniṣad*,¹⁷ this has been expressed as under:

“Prajāpati was this universe. *Vāch* was a second to him. He associated sexually with her; she became pregnant; she departed from him. She produced these creatures; she again entered into Prajāpati.”

Prajāpati is the source of creation; and *Vāk* as one of the five elements for creation, stands for the greatness of Prajāpati.¹⁸

¹⁴R̥V., X. 129. 4

¹⁵A.B. Keith, *The Religion and the philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Vol. II (London, 1925), p. 438

¹⁶Cf. John Dowson, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-330

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 330

¹⁸V.S. Agrawal, 'Ka' Prajāpati, *JOB.*, Vol. VIII, No. 1 (Baroda, 1958), pp. 1-4

Virya (*Retas*), which has been said to have been put into the womb of Sarasvatī, is Prajāpati's force or energy utilised to produce *Vāk*. Another reference as to how *Vāk* is produced from mind (*Manas*) is worth-quoting here. Before manifestation, *Vāk* is mind. The identification and relation of *Manas* and *Vāk* should be understood like this. Mind (*Manas*) is supposed to be equally filled with *Rasa* and *Bala* (*rasabala-samamātrāvacchinna*). During this state of equilibrium, everything is in the state of tranquil; hence no effect. But when there is any stress, such as the desire for expression of an idea, it turns into breath and when the stress is acute, it turns into *Vāk*. Thus, even on this psychological ground, there is a close relationship between *Vāk* and *Manas*, i.e., mind and speech, symbolically referred to by the *Purāṇas* as Brahmā's (Mind) falling in love with Sarasvatī (Speech=*Vāk*).

We may interpret this episode still in a different way. Apparently, in the episode, there is the description of Brahmā and Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī¹⁹ is, decidedly, a different deity from the *Uṣas*, the goddess of the dawn. In one of the *Rgvedic Sūktas*, the sun follows the divine and shining dawn as a wooer follows his mistress. *Uṣas* is also shown associated with Prajāpati. She (*Uṣas*) figures prominently in the *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa*.²⁰

“*prajāpatiḥ svām duhitaramadhyāyaddivamityanya āhuruṣasa—
mityanye.....rohitamabhū-tamabhyait !*”

Here, *Uṣas* is different from that *Uṣas*, who is associated with the sun as his beloved. The dawn, in the *Aitareya-Brahmaṇa*, is viewed as the daughter of Prajāpati. But, there is difficulty to corroborate this legend with that of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, where *Vāk* is shown as produced by Brahmā. This may be interpreted differently. When the dawn comes, it raises up the seers to chant the *Mantras* in honour of gods. The *Uṣas* comes with the sun and it is the latter, who produces the former. Sometimes, in the *Vedic* literature, Prajāpati and Indra are deemed to be the sun. So, the sun and the dawn can be taken as parallel to Brahmā and Sarasvatī. In literature and poetic works, light (*Prakāśa*) stands for knowledge. Light starts

¹⁹RV., I. 115.2

²⁰Alt Br., III.33

coming from the dawn first and from the sun afterwards. It is the sun, which motivates the dawn and this motivation is thought of to produce knowledge (light). In the *Taittiriya-Brahmṇa*, the daughter of Prajāpati is referred to as "sītāsāvitṛī" or "sūryāsāvitṛī"²¹

Some savants elucidate this episode still in a different way. Prajāpati is, unequivocally, the lord of the universe or the creatures. He did create the universe out of him. Prajāpati is also identified with year (*Samvatsara*) and sacrifice (*Yajña*)²². Sarasvatī is formed from √Sṛ, meaning to move and Sarasvatī is one which is always moving. Prajāpati as year always moves through Sarasvatī, the controlling power. And when Prajāpati is identified with sacrifice, there is no contradiction, at all, about the episode; because, in the sacrifice, there is the *Viniyoga* of the *Vedic mantras*. In this *Viniyoga*, *Vāk* (Sarasvatī) is taken as wife meeting with Prajāpati (Brahmā) as husband. During the *Purāṇic* period, Prajāpati has merged in the personality of Brahmā, who is Supreme among the *Purāṇic* triad. Side by side, change did occur in *Vāk* as well; and it, virtually, came to be styled as Sarasvatī. If this *Purāṇic* legend is viewed in this light, then the confusion in regard to the episode, whatsoever, will disappear. Sāyaṇācārya²³ aptly renders:

"prajāpatinā sṇau samucchṛte sthāne sukṛtasya yajñasya yonau niṣikṭamāsīdityarthaḥ....."

The *Vedic* and the *Purāṇic* literature is full of mysticism and symbolism. The things have been rendered so, because of richness of thoughts enshrined in the said literature. We, therefore, ought to look into the episode from various viewpoints. According to some scholars, this myth of Prajāpati has a reference to an astronomical event; viz., the procession of vernal equinox, which was the beginning of the sacrificial year. Prajāpati's incest is symbolical of the retrograde motion of the new year. The year (Prajāpati) shifted itself from *Punarvasu* to *Mṛgaśiras*. This was figuratively spoken of as an incest.²⁴

²¹*Taitt Br.*, II. 3.10

²²Cf. V.V. Dikshit, 'Brahman and Sarasvatī', *PO.*, Vol. VIII (April-July, 1943), p. 66

²³Cf. Sāyaṇa's comm. on *RV.*, X. 61.6

²⁴V.V. Dikshit, *op. cit.*, p. 66

This very *Vedic* episode has been expanded by the *Purāṇas* to suit their taste. But we should see the episode's reality in the light of the discussions and observations made on the foregoing pages.

By this episode, we are given a lesson, too. We may cite here an example of the *Atharva-Veda*. At a place in this *Veda*, an instance (of Indra and the Marutas shown as agriculturists) shows the greatness of the occupation of agriculture²⁵ and suggests to us that one should not be ashamed of when resorted to the occupation of agriculture irrespective of one's high and low position. One may get a moral boast from the episode of Brahmā and Sarasvatī; because when Brahmā fell in love with Sarasvatī (as some savants take it literally), he lost the virtue of *Tapasyā*. He, therefore, had to practise hard penances. This shows repentance on the part of Brahmā. One, therefore, should not be hesitant to repent on wrong things, committed consciously or unconsciously.

In the *Purāṇas*, it is said that Brahmā has produced all the *Vedas* and *Śāstras* from his mouth. Sarasvatī is the supreme goddess of learning and represents all sorts of sciences and *Vidyās*. To connote this, she is given a book and a jar (*Kamaṇḍalu*) in her hands in the *Purāṇas*. All knowledge or learning has developed from the *Vedas*, which are reckoned to represent the mouths of Brahmā. Sarasvatī as the goddess of learning, is the daughter of Brahmā; because as *Vāk*, she took her birth from them (the *Vedas*=mouths). The romance between Brahmā and Sarasvatī as shown in the *Purāṇas*, is out and out symbolic; because Sarasvatī represents the sacred learning and not the profane learning.²⁶ Even as goddess of learning, Sarasvatī represents pure and sacred learning. Since this episode between the two, proved unaesthetic; the idea to depict the father as husband of his own daughter was dropped later on.

The account of Brahmā's incestuous connection with his daughter has been refuted by the *Matsya-Purāṇa* itself.²⁷

²⁵Cf. Śrīoāda Dāmodara Sātavalekara, *Atharva-Veda-Subodha Bhāṣya*, Pt. II (Surat, 1960), p. 61 on *AV.*, VI. 30

²⁶V.V. Dikshit, *op. cit.*, p. 67

²⁷*MP.*, IV. 7-8, 10

anyacca sarvavedānāmadhiṣṭhātā caturmukhaḥ !
gāyatrī brahmaṇastadvadaṅgabhūtā nigadyate !!

amūrtam mūrtimadvā'pi mithunam tatpracakṣate !
virin̄ciryatra bhagavānstatra devī sarasvatī !!

×

×

×

vedarāśiḥ smṛto brahmā sāvitṛī tadadhiṣṭhitā !
tasmānna kaściddoṣaḥ syātsāvitṛigamane vibhoḥ !!

The Colour of Brahmā

1. IMPORTANCE OF GUṆA

We have already said that Brahmā is the guardian deity of the *Rājasa-Purāṇas*.²⁸ The categories of the *Purāṇas*, namely, the *Sāttvika*, the *Rājasa* and the *Tāmasa* have been shown on the basis of predominance of each *Guṇa* in each category. Each *Guṇa* has got its significance in the matter of creation, maintenance and destruction. This is endorsed by a fact, which is found in the *Vāmana-Purāṇa*.²⁹

rajaḥ sṛṣṭiguṇam proktaṁ sattvaṁ sthitiguṇam viduḥ !
upasanhārkāle ca tamoguṇaḥ pravartate !!

Rajas is known to be the quality of the creation, *Sattva* is the quality of the preservation and the quality of *Tamas* prevails at the time of the destruction.

Among the triad of the *Purāṇic* gods, Brahmā is the Creator. Therefore, he has appropriately been alluded to *Rajas guṇa*, Viṣṇu, *Sattva* and Śiva, *Tamas*. Without these qualities, the world will remain standstill. Without quality, Brahmā is full Brahma; but as guardian of *Rajas*, he is guṇābhimānīdeva.

2. THE COLOUR OF BRAHMĀ

Since Brahmā represents *Rajas*, therefore, his colour can be assigned

²⁸See Chapter-I of this volume.

²⁹*VāmP.*, XXIII. 22.20

on the basis of this quality. In the Sāṅkhya Philosophy, *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are termed to be white, red and black:

ajāmekām lohitaśuklakṛṣṇām vahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānām
namāmaḥ !
 ajā ye tām juṣamāṇām bhajante jahatyenām bhukta-
bhogām numastān !!³⁰

Here, *Lohita*, *Śukla* and *Kṛṣṇa* stand for *Rajas*, *Sattva* and *Tamas*. This Sāṅkhya tenets holds good of the *Purāṇas* also. As a result, Brahmā is of red colour as he represents the *Rājasa-Purāṇas*.³¹ Though Brahmā has been given red colour; but this colour is not deemed to be very bright. It is rather light red. The *Purāṇas*³² and some other texts³³ liken it to that of the light of the morning sun—'sūryāyutasama-prabhaḥ' and 'aruṇādityasaṅkāśam.' The red colour is very stimulating; because Brahmā having possessed of this quality, has to expand this world to suit his wishes.

On the basis of this study, we come to know that Brahmā is of red colour; but some organs of his body, are of different colours. For instance, his eyes are white.³⁴ In the *Padma-Purāṇa*, he is called *Piṅgalalocana*, i.e., a co-mixture of yellow and white gives *Piṅgala* colour to the eyes of Brahmā. Elsewhere, he is said to have eyes like a lotus.³⁵ At a place of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, the image of Brahmā is said to have white colour.³⁶ This shows that Brahmā is of red colour; but his images are of white colour. It is also possible that by the time of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, only the image of Brahmā was of white colour as was the case with his spouse. In the

³⁰Sāṅ K., 1

³¹VDP., XLVI. 7

"aruṇam rajaso varṇam tena padmāgrasannibham"; E.B. Hevel, *Indian Architecture* (London, 1913), Chapter II. "Their colours red, white and blue were emblems of the Trimurti, the three aspects of the One—red for Brahma, the creator; white for Shiva, the Divine spirit; blue for Vishnu, the preserver and upholder of the universe."

³²PdP., XXXVI. 178

³³The *Kālivilāsa-Tantram* (London, 1917), Patala 20, Śloka. 12

³⁴MP., CCLX. 41

³⁵PdP., V. 4. 101

³⁶VDP., XLIV. 3

Padma-Purāṇa, his neck is described to be of blue colour.³⁷ Generally, all gods and goddesses, in the Hindu pantheon, are shown as ever-young; but Brahmā is an exception to this. In the *Purāṇas*, as well as in the works of the classical poets, Brahmā is portrayed as an old god, wearing a sacred thread across his shoulder. His old age is embellished with the knowledge of high order gained through the study of the *Vedas*. As an old man is indifferent to the world, so is Brahmā, i.e. sometimes, Brahmā is shown indifferent to the world. As an old man bears a white beard and is usually grey-headed, so is Brahmā. This is borne out by the *Padma-Purāṇa*.³⁸ In the *Brahmavaiṣṇava-Purāṇa*, his teeth are also shown white.³⁹ In the *Agni-Purāṇa*,⁴⁰ he is said to be of golden colour (*Haima-Varṇaḥ*). This *Haimavarṇa* is like that of the colour of the sun, which is rising in the morning. This very colour of Brahmā is differently called 'padmāgrasannibha'.⁴¹ Another verse of the *Matsya-Purāṇa* refers to Brahmā as 'varṇataḥ padmagarbhābhaḥ'.⁴² Since Brahmā represents the *Rajas* quality, he is aptly given red colour.⁴³

The Colour of the Garments of Brahmā

Brahmā wears white garments on his red body.⁴⁴ Only white garments and no other garments are assigned to him. A few instances will uphold this view. A verse of the *Matsya-Purāṇa* reads :

*kurvāṇamiva lokānstrīṇchuklāmbaṛadharaṁ vibhum !
mṛgacarmadharaṁ cāpi divya-yājñopavītinam!!⁴⁵*

³⁷*PdP.*, V. 35.165

³⁸*Ibid.*, V. 35.179

³⁹*BvP.*, I. 3.31

⁴⁰*AP.*, CLXXVI. 3 (Chowkhamba edition)

⁴¹*VDP.*, XLVI. 8

⁴²*MP.*, CCLX. 41

⁴³See Dr Janārdana Miśra, *Bhāratīya Pratīka Vidyā* (Patna, 1959), p. 52 ; see also f. n. No. 1 quoted from E.B. Havel's *Indian Architecture* (London, 1913), Chapter II, which "speaks as under regarding Brahmā's Colour ".....Their colours red, white and blue, were emblems of the Trimurti, the three aspects of the One-red for Brahma, the creator; white for Shiva, the Divine spirit; blue for Vishnu, the preserver and upholder of the universe....."

⁴⁴*BvP.*, I.3.31 "śukvāsāḥ śukladantaḥ śuklakeśaḥ"

⁴⁵*MP.*, CCLX. 43

Here, Brahmā is said 'Śuklāmbāradhara', i.e., wearing a white garment.

In India, while making images of gods and goddesses, a particular dress is assigned to a particular deity. For instance, Kālī wears black garments, in toto. Sarasvatī wears white dress out and out. This is the case with Brahmā also. In this context, let us study a reference of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*. This is rendered as under :

*'śuklāśuklamato jñeyam vāsaḥ kṛṣṇājinam vibhoḥ !!*⁴⁶

Here, according to some, 'Śuklāśuklamato' stands as an adjective of *Vāsaḥ*. Brahmā's garment, therefore, should be either white or black accordingly. But Brahmā never wears black garment. To us, *Asuklāmataḥ* seems to be an adjective of *Ajinam*, which should be black as Brahmā usually wears it. In *Kṛṣṇājinam*, *kṛṣṇa* is not an adjective of *Ajinam*; hence no duplication. Of course, *Kṛṣṇa* is an adjective; but not of *Ajinam*, verily of dear. Brahmā is the embodiment of knowledge, which is pure in its entirety. The colour of knowledge is white and it is for this reason that Brahmā is given swan (*Haṁsa*) as his vehicle and white rosary in his hand (*ekasmind-akṣiṇe pāṇāvakṣamālā tathā śubhā*).⁴⁷ Also Brahmā should not wear a black dress; because it would be a great incongruity to the dress of a god of red colour. These two colours do not match with each other. How this colour would suit Brahmā, who is the great lover of beauty and who creates beautiful things out of his imagination. In his dress, even partial blackness cannot be thought of. His dress is completely white, which is endorsed by the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa* :

*śuklavāsāḥ śukludantaḥ śuklakeśaścaturmukhaḥ |
yogīśaḥ śilpināmīśaḥ sarveśārṇ janako guruḥ !!*⁴⁸

⁴⁶VDP., XLVI. 12

⁴⁷Ibid., XLIV. 7

⁴⁸BVP., I. 3.31

In this verse, '*śuklavāsāḥ*' sets all doubts aside and declares Brahmā dressed in white dresses (*śuklavāsāḥ*). On his head, there is a white turban (*Sitoṣṇiṣaḥ*).⁴⁹ This colour all together matches with his head and beard. The latter, too, is of complete white colour (*Haricchamaśruḥ*). Here, *harit* implies white colour rather than green colour.

Brahmā is actually Brahma who is squarely white; because in him, two qualities, namely, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are in darment state whereas, there is the predominance of *Satta*. This *Sattva* is inherited by Brahmā from Brahma to some extent. It is for the reason that this quality of Brahmā is manifested in his creation. For example, his all *mānasa-putras* (mind-born sons) are possessed of this quality on the principle that the imprint of cause is reflected in effect. This is further endorsed by another instance. In the *Matsya-Purāṇa*,⁵⁰ it is said that Brahmā produced his wife from half of his body and she was completely white :

"śarīrārdhāttato bhāryāṁ samutpādityāñchubhām !!"

Thus, the wife of Brahmā is white coloured. Not his wife; but his all daughters are also of the same colour:

*lakṣmīrmarutvatī sādhyā viśveśā ca matā śubhā !!*⁵¹
*devī sarasvatī caiva brahmaṇā nirmītāḥ purāḥ !*⁵²
etāḥ pañca variṣṭhā vai suraśreṣṭhāya pārthivai !!

The colour of Brahmā's Spouse

The colour of Sarasvatī is also a very interesting point, particularly so far as her anthropomorphosis is concerned. In the *Vedas*, particularly in the *R̥gveda*, she is called '*Śubhṛā*'⁵³, which seems to be a step towards her anthropomorphosis; but in the *Purāṇas*, she has been fully anthropomorphised. Her Vighraha form is not only due to her

⁴⁹ MP., CLXX. 10

⁵⁰ Ibid., CLXXI. 21

⁵¹ Ibid., CLXXI. 32-33; also cf. PdP., V. 37.79

⁵² loc. cit.

⁵³ Cf. RV., V. 42.21; VII. 95. 6, 96. 2

colour and she has been provided with almost all of her physical aspects also. So far as her colour is concerned, the *Purāṇas* refer to her as of white, blue and *Syāma* colours. These are briefly discussed as follows:

1. WHITE

Unlike the *Vedas* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Purāṇas* repeatedly describe Sarasvatī to have a pure white complexion. Such a colour of her complexion is obvious enough from the various epithets used for her. For instance, she is called '*paramā jyotirūpā*'⁵⁴ (like a heap of bright light), '*jyotisvarūpā*'⁵⁵ '*Himacandanakundendukumudāmbhojasannibhā*'⁵⁶ (white in colour like snow, scandal, kunda, indu, kumuda, lotus all having white colours), '*Suklavarṇā*'⁵⁷ (having white complexion), '*Koṭīcandraprabhājuṣṭapuṣṭaśrīyuktavigrahā*'⁵⁸ (having the body besmeared with the lusture of crores of moons) and '*Śvetābhā*'⁵⁹ (one of white lusture).

She possesses the beauty of crores of full moon '*Koṭipūrṇenduśobhādhyā*'⁶⁰. It is not only her complexion that is white; but at the same time, she is also described to have white eyes like lotuses '*Saratpaṅkajalocanā*'⁶¹. Besides, she is also called '*Sudatī*'⁶² 'having beautiful or shining white teeth'.

Thus, she is out and out white. Her white colour is one of the three colours representing her three '*Guṇas*', in her capacity of one of the five *Prakṛtis*⁶³. But so far as her '*sattva-guṇātmikā*' form of *Prakṛti* is concerned, it does not represent her '*Śuddhasattvasvarūpā*' form⁶⁴ only; it also stands for a psychological connotation. Since knowledge is generally understood to evolve from *Sattvaguna*, it is

⁵⁴BvP., II. 5. 10

⁵⁵Ibid., II. 5. 34

⁵⁶Ibid., II. 1. 36, 5. 13

⁵⁷Ibid., I. 3. 54; II. 2. 54, 4. 46

⁵⁸Ibid., II. 4. 46

⁵⁹AP., L. 16

⁶⁰BvP., I. 3. 55

⁶¹Ibid., I. 3. 55

⁶²Ibid., I. 3. 56

⁶³Ibid., II. 1. 1 ff.

⁶⁴Ibid., II. 1. 36

quite reasonable to hold Sarasvatī as the goddess possessed of white colour. Knowledge is also thought of as identical with Sattva (*sattvaṁ jñānam*).

Like *Brāhmaṇic* Sarasvatī, some goddesses of learning in Buddhism, e.g., Mahāśarasvatī, Vajraṇā Sarasvatī and Āryā Sarasvatī are also white-complexioned⁶⁵. In the *Aparājitapṛcchā*, by her other epithets like '*Śvetabhujā*', '*Śvetāṅgī*' and '*Candraśekhara*', Sarasvatī seems to be out and out of white colour. These epithets seem equally applicable to the four forms of Sarasvatī—Mahāvidyā, Mahāvānī, Bhārati and Sarasvatī.⁶⁶

The most familiar colour is white. Keeping her nature in view, her devotee is asked to please her just by giving away, according to his capacity, the white garment (*Śuklavāstrāṇi*) and by offering to her the white garland (*Śuklamālya*) and ointment (*Anulepa*)⁶⁷.

2. ŚYĀMĀ

In addition to her description as having the white colour, Sarasvatī is also called '*Śyāmā*'.⁶⁸ It is necessary, in such a circumstance, to decide what the term '*Śyāmā*' implies.

The word '*Śyāmā*' appears to have been used for Sarasvatī in two different senses. Generally, everywhere in literature, gods and goddesses have been depicted as ever-young and the old age has totally been discarded. In the case of Sarasvatī, '*Śyāmā*' probably denotes her youth⁶⁹. But, at the same time, Sarasvatī may also be supposed to be of black (*Śyāma*).

Usually '*Śyāma*' stands for black colour and the epithet '*Śyāmā*' befits Sarasvatī in the sense of '*Śyāma*' (black colour), which is clear

⁶⁵Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (Calcutta, 1957), pp. 349-351

⁶⁶*Apar.*, CCXXX. 15

⁶⁷*MP.*, LXVI. 6

⁶⁸*BvP.*, I. 3. 56.

"sasmitā sudatī syāmā sundarīṇāṁ ca sundarī !

śreṣṭhā śrutinām śāstrāṇāṁ jananī parā !!

⁶⁹From the verse (*BvP.*, I. 3. 56), it is beyond doubt true that Sarasvatī is called most beautiful (*sundarīṇāṁ ca sundarī*), which is possible in one's youth. Kālidāsa in his *Meghadūta* (II. 22), also uses '*Śyāmā*' for Yakṣiṇī to denote her youth: "*tanvī śyāmā śikharidāsanā pakvabimbā dharoṣṭhī*".

from the following. According to the Sāṅkhya system, 'Prakṛti', is the fundamental source of the universe. In the *Purāṇas*, too, at one place or the other, the same philosophy has been ushered in in a well-mannered way. For instance, Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī are said to be denoted by the single name of 'Prakṛti'. All of them are capable of creation. They are, therefore, called the five forms of 'Prakṛti'.⁷⁰ This 'Prakṛti', as the source of the universe, is said to have been possessed of the three *Guṇas*—*Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. These *Guṇas* are classified categorically according to their nature. *Sattva* stands for white colour, *Rajas* for red and *Tamas* for black.⁷¹

When these *Guṇas* are in low and high grades, there is an upheaval and creation starts therefrom; but when they are proportionally equal, it is vice versa. Scientifically, when red, white and black colours are mixed together, the ultimate colour is black. Similarly, the ultimate colour of 'Prakṛti', must be black; for, at the stage of *Pralaya*, all the *Guṇas* are in equilibrium and remain standstill and, therefore, their admixture should give the black colour. Being one of the forms of 'Prakṛti', Sarasvatī is judiciously described to be of black colour (*Śyāmā*). *Śyāmā* also stands for colour like gold.⁷²

In Jainism, there are sixteen forms of Sarasvatī. Mahākālī is one of them,⁷³ whose colour is black. Being one of the forms of Sarasvatī, Mahākālī aptly accounts for her black (*Śyāmā*) colour. This also justifies the description of Sarasvatī as having black colour (*Śyāma*).

3. BLUE

This colour has not apparently been mentioned in the *Purāṇas*. This occurs in the other literature, particularly, in the *Tantras*. In the *Śrīvidyārṇava-Tantra*, there is the description of 'Nīlasarasvatī'. It appears that Sarasvatī of *Brāhmaṇism* is there called 'Nīlasarasvatī', probably because of her new *Tāntric* conception, which accepts her colour as blue. According to the above *Tantra*, which provides her

⁷⁰ *BvP.*, II. 1. 1, 4. 4

⁷¹ *VP.*, XXIII. 54-57; *SK.*, 1

⁷² *ŚrT.*, Introduction, p. 25

⁷³ B.C. Bhattacharya, *The Jain Iconography* (Lahore, 1939), pp. 57, 125-126, 129, 171

with this colour, the hands of the goddess are beautified with blue lotuses.⁷⁴

Elsewhere, Sarasvatī has been depicted as partially of blue colour. In Buddhism, Vajrasarasvatī is said to have a face, the right phase of which is blue and the left white : 'nīlasitadakṣiṇāvāmamukhīm'⁷⁵. Like Buddhism, in Jainism, too, one of the Vidyādevīs, Mānavī, according to one of the sects, is said to be of blue colour. Her seat is also blue. This goddess seems to have her close association with 'Nīlasarasvatī' of *Brāhmaṇism*.⁷⁶

In the *Aparājitaṭṭcchā*, a quite different colour has been associated with Sarasvatī. According to it, it is her neck alone, which is of blue colour ; neither her body nor her face. The *Aparājitaṭṭcchā* brings to light the four forms of Sarasvatī. They are Mahāvidyā, Mahāvāṇī, Bhārati and Sarasvatī.⁷⁷ In the *Devatāmūrtiprakaraṇa* of Sūtradhāra Maṇḍana, there are twelve forms of Sarasvatī—Mahāvidyā, Mahāvāṇī, Bhārati, Sarasvatī, Āryā, Brāhmī, Mahādhenū, Vedagarbhā, Īśvari, Mahālakṣmī, Mahākālī and Mahāsarasvatī⁷⁸. The four forms of Sarasvatī given in the *Aparājitaṭṭcchā* tally with the first four forms among the twelve given by Sūtradhāra Maṇḍana. In all probability, the epithet '*Nīlakaṇṭhī*' is equally applicable to Mahāvidyā, Mahāvāṇī, Bhārati and Sarasvatī and consequently, they all may be held to have their neck of blue colour.

The Vehicle of *Brahmā*

During the *Purāṇic* period, almost all gods are shown associated with various vehicles (*Vāhanas*).⁷⁹ *Vāhana* is from √*Vaḥ*, meaning to carry. It is employed to carry something or somebody. When a *Vāhana* is associated with a particular god, to a common man, it shows a particular god, travelling by it. This is true to a some extent.

⁷⁴*Śrīvid T.*, 11. 1; see also *ibid.*, Part II, p. 273 for "nīlasarasvatī-vidyābheda-vidhiḥ".

⁷⁵*Sādh Mā.*, 163

⁷⁶B. C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175

⁷⁷*Apa Prc.*, CCXXX. 15

⁷⁸*Dev Pra.*, VIII. 80-85

⁷⁹For *Vāhanas* of some gods, see Manmath Nath Dutta Shastri, *Agni-Purāṇam*, Vol. I (Varanasi, 1967), pp. 186-188; for vehicle of *Brahmā*, see various images at the end of the book.

For instance, Yama, the god of the death, moves on the back of a buffalo of terrific nature. But this does not hold good of all gods; because *Vāhanas* of some of them, are too small to carry them over their bodies. They are also so tender and delicate to bear the weight of their masters. Sometimes, one may ask, if gods are so powerful to do anything at their will, why are they shown travelling by *Vāhanas* of trifling nature and character. It is rather something incongruous to the nature and status of gods that they should use *Vāhanas*. They may reach their place of destination by mere will. A very brief answer to these points is that these vehicles are associated with gods only in a symbolical sense. *Vāhanas* have no power (*Śakti*) of their own, to carry gods. They are motivated by the energy of gods. Not only *Vāhana*, but every object, held by or on any part of god, stands for some esoteric meaning. We will deal here with the case of *Brahmā* only.

1. SWAN AS THE VEHICLE OF BRAHMĀ

Almost all the *Purāṇas* assign swan as the vehicle of *Brahmā*. To endorse this, we may cite a couple of instances. The *Matsya-Purāṇa*, which devotes most of its chapters on iconographical aspects, says that the image of *Brahmā* should be made as seated on a swan or it should be 'Kamalāsana' :

*"brahmā kamaṇḍaludharaḥ kartavyaḥ sa caturmukhaḥ !
hamsārūḍhaḥ kvacitkāryaḥ kvacicca kamalāsanaḥ !!!"*⁸⁰

Accordingly, *Brahmā* should ride a swan (*Hamsārūḍhaḥ*). At another place of the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, *Brahmā* is portrayed as seated on a chariot, drawn by seven swans : "*jagatādhāraṁ catur-bāhuṁ saptaḥṁse rathe sthitam.*"⁸¹

2. THE IMPLICATION OF SWAN

In the *Kathopaniṣad*, the swan as residing in the sky, has been identi-

⁸⁰MP., CCLX. 40

⁸¹VDP., XLIV. 6

fied with the sun (*Sūrya*)⁸² and ultimately, it stands for the Supreme Soul (*Ātman*), who is above all things on the earth.⁸³ It is commonly believed that it came to the earth from the high and took various manifestations in different regions, when it entered them. So, in all regions, *Ātman* (Soul) is said to be of seven swans; for each swan resembles one region (*Loka*). As there are seven *Lokas*, the swans are also seven to represent them. We have seen in the foregoing pages that the chariot of Brahṁā is drawn by seven swans. The text itself of a *Purāṇa* says that these swans represent seven *Lokas* :

*"ye lokāste rathe haṁsāḥ brahmaṇaḥ parameṣṭhinaḥ"*⁸⁴

Now, let us view this point again. According to the *Kathopanishad* (II.2.2), *Ātman* is *Haṁsa* and the *Haṁsa* is none other but the sun. Besides the sun, *Ātman* is the air in the sky. He is the sacrifice and the Soma. He is stationed in men, gods, sacrifice and sky. He represents various objects, produced from different sources.⁸⁵ Thus, *Ātman* is all pervading and everything of the world, has resulted from him. Without any quality, Brahṁā is *Brahma* (*Ātman*). The *Haṁsa* associated with Brahṁā, typifies this very notion. Here, the *Hetu Haṁsa* identifies Brahṁā with *Brahma*; but according to the *Vāmana-Purāṇa*, there is *Pradhāna*, who is supreme and *Puruṣa* is next to him. This next *Puruṣa* is called *Haṁsa*, *Hiranyagarbha*, *Kapila*, *Chhandomūrti* and *Sanātana*. Of these, the *Haṁsa* and *Hiranyagarbha* expressively stand for Brahṁā. Here, *Pradhāna* should be taken as *Brahma* and *Puruṣa* as Brahṁā. According to the above observations, if *Haṁsa* represents *Brahma* and if according to the *Vāmana-Purāṇa*, Brahṁā is also *Haṁsa*, then *Brahma* and Brahṁā, without any fear of doubts, are

⁸²Kath., II. 2.2

⁸³*"haṁsaḥ śucisad vasurantarikṣasad"*

⁸⁴*Ibid.* II. 2.2

"haṁsaḥ śucisad vasurantarikṣasad

hotā vedīṣad atithirduroṇasad !

nṛsadvarasad ṛtasad vyomasad abjā

gojā ṛtājā adrijā ṛtaṁ bṛhat !"

⁸⁵*VDP.*, LXVI. 13

⁸⁶The verse rendered in the *Kathopanishad.*; II. 2.2 is found in the *BV.*, IV. 40.5; *AV.*, X. 24; *XII.* 14; *ŚBr.*, VI. 7.3.11

identical. Therefore, both can be said to be representing the soul.

It is also to be noticed here why seven *Haṁsas* are said to be yoked to the chariot of Brahmā ? Number seven has been a popular number to be used in several ancient countries. For instance, in India, the Marutas are seven (*sapta gaṇopetā marutaḥ*).⁸⁶ Also, there is a galaxy of seven *Ṛṣis*, who are equally mentioned in the *R̥gveda*, the *Mahābhārata* and *Purāṇas*.⁸⁷ The *Saptarṣis* are also said to be the mental sons of Brahmā. Thus, they represent knowledge. Brahma and Brahmā are the very source of that divine knowledge: Besides, the sun, the moon and the constellation of five stars make a number of seven, which has got many religious and astronomical significance in our country as well as elsewhere.

Number seven is also very often mentioned in the enumeration of the rivers of India. Although, there were a number of rivers in ancient India; but great importance was assigned only to the seven rivers of the north, which are as follows :

- “(1) Gaṅgā (Ganges) ;
- (2) Yamunā (Jamna) ;
- (3) Sarāswatī (Sarsuti) ;
- (4) Sutudri (Satie) ;
- (5) Parushani ;
- (6) Marud-Vridhā ;
- (7) Ārjikyā (the Vipāsā Hyphasis Byās). ”⁸⁸

To us, seven *Haṁsas* collectively may symbolise the following sense also⁸⁹ :

- (1) Stream of bliss,
- (2) Stream of existence,

⁸⁶Cf. Triveni Prasad Singh, *Hindu Dhārmika Kathāon Ke Srota* (Patna, 1955), pp. 52-53

⁸⁷For details see Siddhesvara Śāstri Cītrāva, *op. cit.*, pp. 1019-1020; Vettam Mani, *op. cit.*, p. 691 “A group of hermits. There are seven hermits in this group. The *Saptarṣis* in each *Manvantara* (age of Manu) are different. As there are fourteen *Manvantaras* before a great deluge, by that time ninety eight *Saptarṣis* will be born and dead. The father of the *Saptarṣis*, in each Manu's age, Marici, Aṅgiras, Atri, Pulastya, Vasiṣṭha, Pulaha and Kratu are the mental sons of Brahmā”.

⁸⁸Cf. John Dowson, *op. cit.*, p. 281

⁸⁹Abhaya. Deva, “Sarasvatī Devī Evaṁ Nadi,” *Vedavāṇī*, Varṣa 10, Aṅka 7 (Vārāṇasī), p. 13

- (3) Stream of consciousness,
- (4) Stream of Manu,
- (5) Stream of truth,
- (6) Stream of breath,
- (7) Stream of gross body.

Sri Aurobindo⁹⁰ takes the seven rivers as the seven fold waters of life and defines them as follows :

"The sevenfold waters thus rise upward and become the pure mental activity, the Mighty ones of Heaven. They there reveal themselves as the first external and ever-young energies, separate streams but of one origin—for they have all flowed from the one womb of the super-conscious Truth—the seven Words or fundamental creative expressions of the divine Mind, *Saptavāñih.....*"

From this expression, we deduce that the number seven represent the very supreme power of the world, be it in the form of mind, life, water, consciousness, words, *etc.*

Haṁsa was also one of the mind-born sons of Brahmā and he practised austerities life-long. Besides, *Haṁsa* is also thought of an incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu, in *Kṛtayuga*.⁹¹ We have already seen that Brahmā, according to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, represents one of the *Mūrtis* of Viṣṇu. These instances present *Haṁsa* as associated with Brahmā. *Haṁsa* typifies the creation of the world. For this detail, see further under heading '*Vehicle of Sarasvatī*'.

Men of the world are love-lorn. They have lost their foresight to see beyond the world and the worldly objects. Their lustful desire leaves no room for them to think of the Supreme. They are not afraid of death. They do not have the knowledge of *Sat* and *Asat*, therefore, are unable to think that this whole world is but the revelation of the ultimate reality.⁹² Brahmā and *Haṁsa* remind men all this; for the former is next to the ultimate reality or is the manifest form of that reality, while *Haṁsa* is the incarnation of the ultimate reality; and at the same time, it represents the world. Thus, there are two qualities in *Haṁsa*.

⁹⁰Sri Aurobindo, *op. cit.*, p. 138

⁹¹*BhāP.*, IV. 8.1; XI. 13.19-41

⁹²*Dr Sarvanand Pathak, Viṣṇupurāṇa Kā Bhārata* (Ckawkhamba, Varanasi, 1967), p. 222

The Vehicle of Brahmā's Spouse

Like Brahmā, Sarasvatī, too, rides a swan. Besides swan, peacock has also been given to her as her vehicle. A full detail of them, runs in the following pages along with philosophical connotations.

1. THE SWAN

By the study of the *Purāṇas*, we arrive at the conclusion that she has inherited her vehicle from her father or husband Brahmā, who has the swan as his vehicle. The *Matsya-Purāṇa*, which devotes most of its chapters on iconographical aspects, says that the image of Brahmā should be made as seated on a swan or it should be 'Kamalāsana'.⁹³ Similarly, Sarasvatī is also described as riding a swan.⁹⁴ The *Matsya-Purāṇa*, while prescribing the identical formula for making the images of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, says that the image of Brahmā should correspond to that of Brahmā.⁹⁵ As Brahmā has the swan as his vehicle, similar must be the case with Sarasvatī, i.e., she should also be seated on a swan (*Hamsādhirūdhā*).⁹⁶

In Jainism, some of its *Vidyādevīs* like Vajraśṛṅkhālā,⁹⁷ Kālī,⁹⁸ Gāndhārī,⁹⁹ etc., are said to have the swan as their vehicle.

2. THE PEACOCK

Besides the swan, the peacock has also been alluded to as the vehicle of Sarasvatī. This vehicle hardly finds mention in the *Purāṇas*; but elsewhere it is associated with Sarasvatī.¹⁰⁰

The peacock gets the prominent place in Jainism as the vehicle of some of the *Vidyādevīs*, such as Rohiṇī,¹⁰¹ Prajñaptī,¹⁰² Apratīcākṛā,¹⁰³ etc.

⁹³MP., CCLX: 40

⁹⁴PrŚā., VIII. 41

⁹⁵MP., CCLXI. 24-25

⁹⁶Ibid., CCLXI. 25

⁹⁷B.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 124

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 124

⁹⁹Ibid., pp. 141, 173

¹⁰⁰Charles Coleman, *The Mythology of the Hindus* (London, 1832), p. 9

¹⁰¹B.C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 166

¹⁰²Ibid., pp. 98, 167

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 169

The different sects of Jainism (i.e., Śvetāmbaras and Digambaras) accept a variety of vehicles for the *Vidyādevīs*. For instance, the cow is the vehicle of Rohiṇī (Śvetāmbara sect),¹⁰⁴ the elephant of Vajrāṅkuśa (Śvetāmbara sect)¹⁰⁵, the Garuḍa of Apraticakrā¹⁰⁶, the Cuckoo of Puruṣadattā,¹⁰⁷ the deer of Kālī (Digambara sect),¹⁰⁸ the tortoise of Mahākālī (Digambara sect).¹⁰⁹ the man of Mahākālī (Śvetāmbara sect),¹¹⁰ the alligator of Gaurī (Śvetāmbara sect),¹¹¹ and the like.

3. THE IMPLICATION OF THE SWAN AND THE PEACOCK

The swan (*Haṃsa*) is taken to be a very superior bird and is said to possess a sense of spirituality and divinity. It is, probably, due to its divinity that it is taken to be one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu.¹¹² Moreover, in the *Prapañcasāra*, Paṭala 4, this whole world is called 'Haṃsātma'. The word 'Haṃsātma' has to it a philosophical purport according to which the whole world is conceived to be 'Haṃsa'. In this context, it is necessary to bring to light the full connotation of the word 'Haṃsa' so as to understand the philosophical associations with it.

The following observation offers a very fine explanation of the form of Haṃsa :

'I am that'—one who has this feeling of identification and ends the fear of the world, is *Haṃsa*. Here, 'Aham' stands for Jīvātman and 'Saḥ' for Brahma or Supreme reality.¹¹³ Sarasvatī also, in her per-

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 166

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 168

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 169

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 126

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 170

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 129

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 171

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 172

¹¹² Brindavan C. Bhattacharya, *Indian Images*, Part I (Calcutta, 1921), p. 13

¹¹³ Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 1163

"the vehicle of Brahmā (-represented as borne on a Haṃsa); the Supreme Soul, or Universal Spirit (=brahman; according to Sāy. on R̥g-veda IV. 40.5. in this sense derived either fr. rt. I, han in the sense 'to go', i.e., 'who goes eternally', or resolvable into aham sa, 'I am that', i.e., the supreme Being)."

sonal capacity, represents the three worlds, the three *Vedas*, the three Agnis, the three *Guṇas*, the three stages and all the *Tanmātras*. She is, thus, the embodiment of all the fundamental atoms capable of creating the universe.¹¹⁴ It has been noted in the *Purāṇic* accounts of the origin of Sarasvatī that when the mind-born sons of Brahmā took no interest in the activities of the world, he created Sarasvatī to bear the burden of the universe. So, in the form of 'Śakti' or 'energy of the Supreme Being',¹¹⁵ Sarasvatī created the whole world, which has its base in her and shows her association with the Supreme Being. The swan (*Haṁsa*) represents the position when this 'association' turns into 'identification'. This identification between her and the Supreme Being is symbolised by her vehicle, the swan whose name '*Haṁsa*' by itself is remarkably suggestive.

The other implication of the swan may be interpreted differently. As has been said above, '*Haṁsa*' stands for the identification of 'I' and 'He'. This mode of thinking that 'I' and 'He' are one, can sustain all types of knowledge. Therefore, '*Haṁsa*' is aptly taken to be the vehicle of Sarasvatī. *Haṁsa* is also the name of a mantra, which is called '*Ajapā Mantra*', spoken without an effort. Its sound represents the supreme sound of the Supreme reality. It is by this Supreme sound that knowledge is communicated. *Haṁsa* related to Sarasvatī may be thought as representing all this and it is for this reason that in popular belief, '*Haṁsa*' is said to be 'jñānavān'. Her travelling by '*Haṁsa*' psychologically implies her moving with knowledge. It may also mean that she is the embodiment of 'Jñāna' and wherever she goes by this vehicle, she brings knowledge with her. *Haṁsa* also typifies purity—purity of mind which (mind) is cut off from the worldly temptations.¹¹⁶ The association of '*Haṁsa*' with Sarasvatī, in a way, implies her becoming pure; for she is the embodiment of knowledge or is possessed of knowledge and it is the knowledge through which purity is gained.

Now, the implication of the peacock remains to be seen. For the peacock, there is a Sanskrit word '*Śikhin*'. This word denotes the

¹¹⁴*Vāmp.*, XXXI. 10-12; *SkP.*, VI. 46. 29-30

¹¹⁵Mohd Israil Khan, op. cit., pp. 115-117; Cf. *The Modern Cyclopedia*, Vol. VII (London), p. 344, "the name of Sarasvatī itself implies the female energy."

¹¹⁶John Garret, *Classical Dictionary of India* (Madras, 1871), p. 668

sense of a peacock as well as of Agni.¹¹⁷ Agni has been identified with Sarasvatī¹¹⁸ and Sarasvatī (speech) with sacrifice.¹¹⁹ In the same continuation, it may be held that the three flames of Agni represent the three forms of Sarasvatī (speech). It is, perhaps, to symbolise her psychological and philosophical relation with Agni that she holds the peacock, the symbol of Agni, as her vehicle.

¹¹⁷ Monier Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 1005

¹¹⁸ *VāmP.* XXXII. 10; *RV.*, II. 1.11; also cf. 'pāvukā' *ibid.*, I.3.10

¹¹⁹ *SBr.*, III. 1.49:14

"vyāg vai sarasvatī vyāg yajñah"

CHAPTER-V

THE IMAGE OF BRAHMĀ AND HIS SPOUSE

1. BRAHMĀ IN THE VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARA—PURĀṆA

IN the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Viṣṇu is the central figure and his three *Mūrtis* are called *Brāhmī*, *Vaiṣṇavī* and *Raudri*. We have already seen their meaning earlier. Here, we have to view Brahmā through the iconographical features found in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*. To deal with the iconographical features, there is a Chapter in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, which is called *Pratimālakṣaṇa*. This Chapter starts after *Citrasūtra*, and it is stretched over Chapter XLIV to Chapter LXXXV. The *Pratimālakṣaṇa* and *Citrasūtra* Chapters of the *Purāṇa* in question, are of great importance. The former is the compendium of paintings. *Pratimālakṣaṇa* is formed from *Pratimā* and *Lakṣaṇa*, which literally means accurate description of an image (*Pratimā*). Thus, the *Pratimālakṣaṇa* is related to the art of sculpture, which means the art of carving in relief on stone, wood or clay. This very definition is found in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* (Chapter XLIII).

This evidently shows how particular forms of various deities are fashioned by chiselling stone, metal, wood, clay, etc. The *Vedic* people did not cherish this sort of idea as the Nature was all around them and they eulogised it variously. But, during the *Purāṇic* era, people thought of deities, who had various forms like human beings and,

¹VDP., XLIII. 31-32

yathā citraṁ tathāivoktaṁ khātapūrvaṁ narāḍbip !
suvarṇarūpyatāmrādi tacca lokeṣu darśayet !!
śilādāruṣu loheṣu pratimākaraṇaṁ bhavet !
anenaiva vidhānena yathā citramud-āhṛtaṁ !!

of course, some had different figures. These figures were provided with various emblems, which have got many religious and philosophical purport.² On the basis of the study of the *Pratimālakṣaṇa*, found in the various *Purāṇas*, we deduce that the *Pratimālakṣaṇa* brings us near to *Sākāra* worship of deities and, therefore, unmanifested forms have no place therein. Brahmā in his *Sākāra* (manifested) form figures in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* at several places.

(i) The Image of Brahmā

The Chapter XLIV (VDP) starts with a very brief description of the divine triad. In this Chapter, the iconic description of Brahmā is found in clear terms in verses 5 to 9. According to this *Purāṇa*, Brahmā should have four faces, presenting 'Saumya' and 'Toṣya' forms. He should be seated on a lotus-seat and should wear the skin of a black antelope.³ He ought to have matted hair, four arms and should be seated on a chariot drawn by seven swans (*Haṁsas*). Each of his right arms is put in the palm of each of the left hands. His right hand carries rosary and the left, the water vessel (*Kamaṇḍalu*). He is bedecked with all ornaments.⁴ He is possessed of all good omens and tranquil form. His bodily lustre should be like that of the tip of a lotus-petal and the eyes closed in meditation.⁵ Brahmā should be made in an image, on a painting or in a modelling as having the colour of the tip of a lotus-petal⁶.

²Cf. Dr Priyabala Shah, op. cit., p. 138

³VDP., XLIV. 5

brahmāṇaṁ kārayedvidvāndevaṁ saumyaṁ caturmukham !
baddhapadmasanaṁ toṣyaṁ tathā kṣṇājīnāmbaram !!

⁴Ibid., XLIV 6-7

jatādharmaṁ caturbāhuṁ saptahamse rathe sthitam !
vāme nyastam karatale tasyaikaṁ doryugaṁ bhavet !!
ekasmindakṣiṇe pāṇāvakṣamālā tathā śubhā !
kamaṇḍalurdvitiye ca sarvābharaṇadhārīṇaḥ !!

⁵Ibid., XLIV. 8

sarvalakṣaṇayuktasya śāntarūpasya pāṛthiva !
padmapatradalāgrābham dhyānasanmīlīteḥkṣaṇam !!

⁶Ibid., XLIV. 9

arcāyāṁ kārayeddevaṁ citre vā pustakarmaṇi !ū!!

For an iconic estimate of Brahmā, see his various images at the end of this book. Also see Sanskrit Texts in Appendix II.

Again, Chapter XLVI (*VDP*) is on the *Pratimālakṣaṇa*; but no iconic features of Brahmā, are found here. This Chapter consists of 19 verses and barring 6 verses of the beginning, the rest explain the emblems (*Hetus*) of Brahmā. We will examine these emblems later on. Chapter LXIII deals with the icons of Brahmā. This Chapter consists of three verses and, of these, only the opening verse gives some new iconic features. Here, Brahmā is said to be seated on the petal of a lotus, whereas, in Chapter XLIV, he is shown sitting in a *Padmāsana* posture. Secondly, he is described as flanked by Sāvitrī in his left lap.⁷

2 BRAHMĀ IN THE MATSYA-PURĀṆA

1. GENERAL RULES FOR MAKING AN IMAGE

The *Matsya-Purāṇa* also prescribes general rules for making an image of a particular deity. Let us take the general rules at the outset. According to this *Purāṇa*, for making an image, some measurements are to be taken into account and, of these, according to the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, *trasareṇu*, *bālāgra*, *likhyā*, *yūkā*, *yava* and *aṅguli* are indispensable. We may understand this table as under :

8 <i>trasareṇus</i>	=	1 <i>bālāgra</i>
8 <i>bālāgras</i>	=	1 <i>likhyā</i>
8 <i>likhyās</i>	=	1 <i>yūkā</i>
8 <i>yūkās</i>	=	1 <i>yava</i>
8 <i>yavas</i>	=	1 <i>aṅguli</i>
12 <i>Aṅgulis</i>	=	1 <i>mukhya</i>

Several parts of an image should be made of proportionate dimensions to be in this *Mukhya* measurement⁸. An image may be made of gold, silver, copper, gems, precious stones, stone, wood, iron, brass, compound of copper, bell-metal, sandalwood or other good variety of wood.⁹ Again, images are of various kinds. For instance, they may

⁷*Ibid.*, LXIII.1

padmapatrāsanaasthastu brahmā kāryaścaturmukhaḥ |
sāvitrī tasya kartavyā vāmotsaṅgatā tathā ||

⁸*MP.*, CCLVIII. 17-19

⁹*Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 20-21

be for the use of a household, a temple or a royal place. An image of a household should be bigger than one cubit. A cubit is a measurement measured by the extended thumb and little finger; but an image of a temple or royal place should not exceed 16 cubits (*Vitastis*).¹⁰

The attitude of the face of an image should be divided into nine parts; the neck is to be made of four fingers; and below it (neck), breast should be located measured by one part. Below the breast, the navel should be made beautifully one finger in measurement.¹¹ Below the navel, the organ should be made of one finger, two thighs of two fingers, the knees of four fingers, the ankles of two fingers, the feet of four fingers and the head of fourteen fingers.¹²

The breadth or thickness of several limbs of an image should be as below :

The forehead should be of four fingers, the jaws of two fingers and the lips of one finger.¹³ The thickness of the temples should be of eight fingers and the eyebrows should be half a finger in breadth.¹⁴ Other details regarding height, breadth, colour, attitude, etc., of an image or images are beautifully delineated in this Chapter further.¹⁵

Regarding fashioning of the divine images, the *Matsya-Purāṇa* lays down the following rules.

If the divine image be female, it should be 22 fingers and the space between the breasts is to be 12 fingers and the circumference of the portion at navel should be 42 fingers. If it be a male, the girdle should be made of 55 fingers. The shoulders should be six fingers and the thickness of the neck should be eight fingers, the length eight *Kalās* and the length of the arms should be 42 fingers. The length of the palm of the hand should be five fingers and the middle finger is to be of five fingers. The nameless finger is to be $\frac{1}{7}$ th less, the little finger $\frac{1}{5}$ th less than the middle finger and the ring finger, one-fifth less than the middle finger. The thumb should be four fingers. The joints of the middle finger should be of two fingers long. The joints of the thumb should be like those of the ring finger and the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 23

¹¹ *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 26-27

¹² *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 28-29

¹³ *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 31

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 32

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 33-54

upper joint should be made greater by two *Yavas*. Nails should be made in half of the top joint, which should be smooth, reddish and glossy. The back of the fingers should be somewhat round and the corners should be raised by the one *Kalā*. The hairs of the head should hang on the shoulders by ten fingers. The limbs of the goddesses should be made slender and shorter. The breasts, the thighs, the hips and lions should be made bulky. The abdomen should be in a space of fourteen fingers. All the images should be adorned well with various kinds of nice ornaments in their arms, *etc.* Their necks should be somewhat longer and curved with excellent curbs of hair. The neck, nose and forehead are to be three fingers and a half; and the lower lip is to be of half a finger. The eyes should be more than $1/4$ th of the lips. The ridge of the neck should be a little more than $1/2$ a finger in height.¹⁶

The heights of the *Devas*, *Dānavas* and *Kinnaras* should be nine *Tālas*. One *Tāla* stands for the space between the thumb and the middle finger.¹⁷ Thus, the account of the finger-measurement for making the images of the *Devas* is related to the *Tāla* measurement. The *Tāla* measurement can be understood by looking into the measurement, which has been dealt with the image of *Sarasvatī* in this Chapter further at the end.

2. THE IMAGE OF BRAHMĀ

In the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, a very brief account has been given for making the image of *Brahmā*. The same is being rendered as follows :

The opening verse on the image of *Brahmā*, says that the image of Lord *Brahmā* should be made with four heads holding a *Kamaṇḍalu* in one hand. He should be shown riding on a swan or seated on a lotus, as the case may be.¹⁸ The complexion of the image of *Brahmā* should be reddish, like the bed of the lotus, with four hands, five faces, holding a *Kamaṇḍalu* in the left hand, sacrificial ladle in the right and staff and *Sruva* in the left and right of the other set of

¹⁶*Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 57-70

¹⁷*Ibid.*, CCLVIII. 16

¹⁸*Ibid.*, CCLX. 40

brahmā kamaṇḍaludharaḥ kartavyaḥ sa caturmukhaḥ !
hamsārūḍhaḥ kvacitkāryaḥ kvacicca kamalāsanaḥ !!

hands, and with the *Devas*, seers, *Gandharvas* praying around him. He should be represented as engaged in the work of creation, wearing white raiments, deer skin and a sacred thread.¹⁹

To the right of the image, a site should be located for *Homa* with ghee, etc., and the four *Vedas*. To the left of the image, there should be placed, the image of *Sāvitṛī* and, on the right, that of *Sarasvatī*. The *Ṛṣis* should be placed in front of the Lord.²⁰

(i) Implications of the Emblems of Brahmā

Here, we will see various implications of the objects, which are associated with Brahmā. We see Brahmā, adorned with various objects, which are external. And at the same time, some parts of Brahmā's body are themselves unique. As such, they need explanation. Words actually fail to explain those parts and objects; therefore, various symbols are given to them. In this context, it is but necessary to understand the meaning and purpose of symbols, which are most frequently used in our religion, art, literature, etc.

1. USE AND PURPOSE OF SYMBOLS

Of all religions of the world, Hinduism makes the most use of symbols. As a matter of fact, symbol is an easy and definite approach to know an unknowable and undefineable. A man or a devotee is imperfect. Therefore, he cannot reach the perfect by his limited means. Words fail to express the ultimate reality. All faculties of a man cannot leave their place to trace out the all-pervading; hence the use of symbol. A single use of symbol exposes a belief in its

¹⁹Ibid., CCLX. 41-43

varṇataḥ padmagarbhaḥścaturbāhuḥ śubheksaṇaḥ !
kamaṇḍalum vāmakare sruvaṁ haste tu dakṣiṇe !!
vāme daṇḍadharaṁ tadvatsruvaṁ cāpi pradarśayet !
munibhirdevagandharvaiḥ stūyamānaṁ samantataḥ !!
kurvāṇamiva lokāṅstrīṇchuklāmbaradhāraṁ vibhum !
mṛgacarmadharaṁ cāpi divyayajñopavītinam !!

²⁰Ibid., CCLX. 44-45

ājyasthālīm nyasetpārśve vedāṁśca cāturāḥ punaḥ !
vāmapārśve'sya sāvitṛīm dakṣiṇe ca sarasvatīm !!
agre ca ṛṣyastadvatkāryāḥ paitāmahe pade !

many varieties and ramifications. In Hinduism, beliefs are many and so are the symbols. Symbols are suggestive and they stand for the exposition of deep notion of a devout towards the perfect.²¹ The purpose of the symbol is two-fold. Firstly, the human mind has limited faculties. As a result, he cannot conceive physically all objects of his adoration through them. In religion, mystery surrounds the objects and this mystery is revealed by means of various symbols. Secondly, deities are formless. There are some subtle ideas, which are divinised. We can offer our reverence to them only when they are given some forms. Symbols accord many helpful assistance in the recognition of these deities and forms.²²

2. VARIOUS SYMBOLS OF THE OBJECTS AND BODILY PARTS OF BRAHMĀ

According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Brahmā is said to have four faces, which stand for the four *Vedas*—eastern the *Rgveda*, southern the *Yajurveda*, western the *Sāmaveda* and northern the *Atharvaveda*. The mouths of Brahmā represent the *Vedas*, the four arms the directions, the waters in the water-vessel the whole world—

²¹For details see James Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. 12 (New York, 1958), p. 141

"Of all religions of the East, the home of type and imagery, Hinduism makes the most use of symbols. It has formally declared the ultimate truth to be unknowable and indefinable. In all its scheme of practice and teaching, it seeks to make definite approach to reality by suggestive type or symbol—an approach that can never find its goal, but can only draw nearer and nearer...The symbol is the necessary and helpful intermediary between the inadequate capacity of the mind of the would-be worshipper and the incommunicable nature and the fullness of the unknown whom he adores. A complete and adequate description therefore of the Hindu use of type and symbol would require an almost complete exposition of Hindu belief in its many varieties, and ramifications....."

²²*Ibid.*, p. 142

"The use and purpose of the symbol is twofold : (1) To set forth in visible or audible likeness what cannot be really or fully expressed to the physical eye or ear, or even clearly conceived by the limited faculties of the human mind. All language is in the last resort symbolic, and religious language in an especial degree, for it endeavours to present a mystery, a reality too deep for words..... (2) The image or symbol serves the purpose also of providing in material and suitable form a convenient object of reverence, to meet the religious need of those whose minds, through darkness and ignorance, are unable to grasp the conception of an unseen formless deity."

movable and non-movable. In clear words, the water is a primary element in the creation of the world and this is why, it is shown kept in the *Kamaṇḍalu* of Brahmā. The rosary in his hand represents the time.²³ The time is an important factor, both in the life of Brahmā and onwards transmission of the world through the four *Yugas*, where each *Yuga* has a specific length of period (*Kāla*). Brahmā wears the antelope-skin. This represents the *Yajña*, which is of two-fold—*Śukla* and *Aśukla*.²⁴

We have already²⁵ seen that Brahmā rides a chariot drawn by the seven swans. According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, the seven swans represent the seven *Lokas*, namely, *bhūḥ*, *bhuvaḥ*, *svaḥ*, *mahaḥ*, *janaḥ*, *tapas* and *satyam*.²⁶ In iconography, Brahmā is shown sitting either on a swan or lotus. We will see the implications of the lotus-flower in detail later on. Brahmā is associated with the lotus in two ways. Firstly, in some of the *Purāṇas*, he is put before us as born out of a lotus grown from the navel of Lord Viṣṇu. Secondly, we find him either sitting on a lotus or riding a swan. Usually, all devouts see him in later posture, which is a source of meditation for them. Now, let us take the first account and reckon its implication according to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*. The lotus, which arises from the navel of Viṣṇu, represents the earth (*Mahī*). The pericarp of the lotus stands for the Meru mountain as symbol of steadiness. Brahmā sits on such type of lotus in his *Padmāsana* posture and meditates. In meditation, he thinks of [his highest state (*parama dharma*), which is formless (*Rūpahīna*). When he is in meditation, his eyes are closed and thereby, he visualises the whole

²³VDP., XLVI. 8-10

ṛgvedaḥ pūrvavadaṇaṁ yajurvedastu dakṣiṇaṁ !
paścimaṁ sāmaavedaḥ syādātharvaṇamathottaram !!
ye vedāste mukhā jñeyaścatasro bāhavo diśaḥ !
āpa eva jagatsarvaṁ sthāvaraṁ jaṅgamaṁ tathā !!
tāśca dhārayate brahmā ten haste kamaṇḍaluḥ !
akṣamālā vinirdiṣṭā kālastu brahmaṇaḥ kare !!

²⁴Ibid., XLVI. 11 Ū—12 Pū.

yajñaṁ vitanvate santaḥ śuklāśuklen karmaṇā !
śuklāśuklamato jñeyaṁ vāsaḥ kṣmājinaṁ vibhoḥ !!

²⁵See Chapter-V under "Brahmā in the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*."

²⁶VDP., XLVI. 12Ū—13

bhūrlokaśca bhuvo lokaḥ svarloko 'tha mahattathā !!
janastapaśca satyaṁ ca sapta lokāḥ prākīrtitaḥ !
ye lokāste rathe haṁsā brahmaṇaḥ paramaḥṣṭhinaḥ !!

world.²⁷ Besides, Brahmā bears matted hairs and he is bedecked with ornaments. The hairs represent the herbs, which maintain the world and the ornaments stand for the different branches of learning, which enlighten the world.²⁸

3. SYMBOLS IN GENERAL

To depict the various symbols, Brahmā has been shown as having the four-faces, golden face, crown, white beard, the human form, the four arms, dusty-white garments, rosary in the upper right hand, *Kamaṇḍalu* in the lower left hand, a book in the upper left hand, *Haṃsa* as vehicle, lotus as seat, etc. These parts of the body of Brahmā and objects stand for the various symbols. The main symbols are shown below.

We have already seen that the four faces of Brahmā, symbolise the four *Vedas*, from which the eternal knowledge is gained. Here, knowledge may be said related to *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma* and *Mokṣa*, which are the ultimate aim of the human beings. Besides, the four faces symbolise the four *Yugas* and the four *Varnas*.²⁹ In the iconography, face occupies an important place. The colours have also their own place. According to some, the golden face represents the *Rajoguṇa*, which is the active principle in the creation of the world.³⁰ But it also symbolises the basic system, through which, the world is evolved. Brahmā is the Lord of the world, In the *Purāṇas*, he is known as *Prajāpati*—the master of the creatures. As *Prajāpati*,

²⁷*Ibid.*, XLXI, 14-16

viṣṇunābhau samutpannaṁ sā mahi dvija !
merustu karṇikā tasya vijñeyā rājasattam !!
sarvatra pārthivasthairyaṁ dhyānabandhamataḥ sthitam !
padmāsanaṁ bhagavānvidhatte pārthiven tu !!
ātmanaḥ paramaṁ dhāma rūpabinaṁ vicintayet !
dṛṣṭyartham jagatāmāste dhyānasanmīlitekṣaṇaḥ !!

²⁸*Ibid.*, XLVI, 17-18

tathaivoṣadhayo rājañjagaddhāraṇakāraṇāḥ !
brahamapaṣṭā jaṭā jñeyāḥ sarvagaya mahātmanaḥ !!
prakāśakāṇi lokasya vidyāsthānāni yānīca !
tasyābharapajātāni jñeyāni parameṣṭhinaḥ !!

²⁹"Inder" Inerjit, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-24

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 26

he is like a king. As a king wears a crown on his head, similarly, Brahmā as Prajāpati (King) wears a crown, which symbolises his sovereignty.³¹ This is quite true; for Brahma is the Supreme Being and Brahmā is his manifest form. Therefore, there is no doubt in his superiority. The white beard symbolises antiquity.³²

Brahmā creates the world of living and non-living things. Of these, the creation of the human beings is supreme. In the form of a human being, Brahmā stands for the creation of the human beings. According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, the four arms of Brahmā represent the four directions. As such, Brahmā is omnipotent and omnipresent. Usually, arms and feet are required to do a work, which is assigned to one. Similar is the case with Brahmā also. The two frontal arms symbolise his activity in the manifest world and the opposite arms present activity in the unmanifest world³³. Generally, Brahmā wears white garment and, that is why, he is called *Śuklāmbāradhara*. In this state, his white garment symbolises purity. In iconography, most of his images are shown wearing a white garment; but the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* presents him wearing the skin of a black antelope as a garment. As such, his garments may be of two types—black and white. Those black and white colours connote that the creation of Brahmā is dualistic; for there is the co-mixture of opposite qualities in pairs—good and bad, day and night, etc.³⁴

Rosary occupies an important place in religion. It is associated with many religions of India. It symbolises time, through which, the world is constantly moving on. The world goes on from creation through sustenance to its dissolution. The rosary has 108 beads, which symbolise the various elements, used in the creation.³⁵

Brahmā bears a *Kamaṇḍalu* full of water. The water stands for *Amṛta*—vitalising energy for the creation of the world. According to

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26

³² *Ibid.*, p. 26

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 24

³⁴ *VDP.*, XLVI. 12; "Indu" Inderjit, *op. cit.*, p. 26

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25

one view, the water represents immortality, salvation and supreme joy.³⁶

A book in the upper hand of Brahmā, symbolises knowledge.³⁷ Knowledge is vitally needed in one's life in order to make it happy and fruitful. Brahmā wears a *Yajñopavita* across his shoulder. This symbolises a disciplined activity within the three *Guṇas*—the *Sattva*, the *Rajas* and the *Tamas*. These *Guṇas* work guided by certain laws.³⁸

In the *Purāṇas*, Brahmā is shown either sitting on a lotus or riding a swan. The lotus is red and white. Red colour is the symbol of the *Rajoguṇa*, which has fully been discussed earlier. The white colour symbolises purity. According to the *Lalitasahasranāma*, the lotus has the following feature:

"Nature is its leaves, change is its pollen and consciousness is its placenta. Lotus is naturally stable and full of conscious beauty."³⁹

For the Aryans, Lotus-flower stands for the expression of idea of supernatural birth. It also connotes the idea to express how the first created object came into being from the primordial waters.⁴⁰ Besides, lotus symbolises the seat and footstool of the gods, material universe and the heavenly spheres.⁴¹

The Prescription for the Image of Sarasvatī

A landmark in development has been paved towards the iconographical character of the goddess in her entering the *Purāṇic* era. It is the *Purāṇas*, which at first have anthropomorphised her to the fullest extent and offer to us several iconographical references to her.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 26

³⁷"This also represents the "Amritatva" (immortality) of the Upanishads, the "Nirvana" (salvation) of the Buddha and the "Anandatatva" (Supreme joy) of the Vedantins."

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 25

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 27

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 27

⁴¹James Hastings, *op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 144

"Primarily, the lotus-flower appears to have symbolized for the Aryans the idea of super human or divine birth..."

⁴²Dr Janārdana Miśra, *op. cit.*, p. 52, f. n. 1

Among the *Purāṇas*, it is the *Agni*, the *Matsya* and the *Viṣṇudharmottara*, which deal with this prominently. The *Agni-Purāṇa* spares its chapters XLIX to LV to laying down the prescriptions for the images of various gods and goddesses. In its chapter XLIX on the said subject, while describing the image of Brahmā, it lays down that the images of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī should be respectively at the left and right sides of Brahmā's image: "*ājyasthālī sarasvatī sāvitrī yamadakṣiṇe*".⁴²

Like the *Agni-Purāṇa*, the *Matsya-Purāṇa* also maintains the same formula and it devotes Chapters CCLVIII to CCLXIV to it. It prescribes how the image of Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī should be made with Brahmā. It goes on saying that Brahmāṇī (Sarasvatī as either wife or daughter) should be made like Brahmā (*Brahmasadṛśī*)⁴³ in all respects to his iconic features. As to the image of Brahmā, it says that it should be made of four heads and there should be a water-vessel (*Kamaṇḍalu*) in one of his hands. He should be made riding a swan or seated on a lotus.⁴⁴ The image should have a site for oblations of ghee and the four *Vedas*. To its left, there should be the image of Sāvitrī and to right that of Sarasvatī.⁴⁵

Like the *Agni* and *Matsya Purāṇas*, the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa* spares its third *Khaṇḍa* exclusively for iconic description. In *Adhyāya* XLIV of this *Purāṇa*, Brahmā has been pictured as sitting in the lotus-posture (*Padmāsana*) and has Sāvitrī placed in his left lap.⁴⁶ The striking feature of this description is the absence of Sarasvatī, who has been represented with Sāvitrī by the *Agni* as well as the *Matsya Purāṇas*. It remains not only a mere *Purāṇic* theory; but has also taken iconographical form, which is evident from the following.

The dual image of Brahmā and Sarasvatī found in the Mathura Sculpture⁴⁷ shows partial acceptance of the formula laid down by the *Purāṇas*; partial because sometimes the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*

⁴²AP., XLIX. 15

For an iconographic estimate of Sarasvatī, see her various images at the end of this book.

⁴³MP., CCLXI. 24

⁴⁴Ibid., CCIX. 40

⁴⁵Ibid., CCLX. 44

⁴⁶Cf. Dr Priyabala Shah. *op.cit.*, p. 140

⁴⁷Cf. Brindavan C. Bhattacharya, *op. cit.*, p. 19; see also *op. cit.*, p. 43

has been followed in depicting only Sāvitrī with Brahmā. But such distinction does not always prevail. An obvious attempt has been made at wiping out such a distinction and the two goddesses are given their proper places by depicting both of them with Brahmā. This feature is available in some of the famous sculptures like Mirpur Khas in Sindh⁴⁸ and in the early Chola and late Hoysala Schools.⁴⁹

Besides, the *Purāṇas* themselves would have us believe that in the *Purāṇic* age, the theory of image-making had already been put to practice. This is evident from the following instances. Once the King Ambuvīci, after having known the great powers of Śarasvatī, had a great regard in his heart for her and consequently, taking the clay out of the river Śarasvatī, made an earthen image (*Pratimā*) of hers.⁵⁰ Similarly, in the *Vāmana-Purāṇa*, Śarasvatī is said to have been installed in the form of a *liṅga* at the Sthāṇu-tīrtha by Śiva himself.⁵¹ These instances will suffice to lead us to assume that in the *Purāṇic* age, we find not only allusions to iconic features of various divinities; but also witness that these were by and by translated into real iconography.

1. FACE

In iconography, face attains very great importance. It is this alone through which the whole image is measured out. According to the *Mānasāra*, the image of Śarasvatī and Sāvitrī should be made in accordance with the *Daśatāla* system: "*sarasvatīm ca sāvitrīm ca daśatālen kārayeta*".⁵² The *Daśatāla* system is taken to be the supreme one among *Tālamānas-avatāla*, *aṣṭatāla*, *saptatāla*, etc., and according to all these measuring systems, the whole image (*Pratimā*) should be ten times the face. This *Daśatāla* system is again divided into the three categories according to its height, giving the measurement various names such as *Uttama*, *Madhyama* and *Adhama daśatālas*. As per rules, the largest *Daśatāla* system divides the whole length of the image into 124 proportionally equal parts, the *Madhyama* into 120 and

⁴⁸Cf. Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography* (Calcutta, 1956), p. 518

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 518

⁵⁰*SkP.*, VI. 46. 16-17

⁵¹*VāmP.*, XL. 4

⁵²*MāASc.*, LIV. 19

the Adhama into 116.⁵³ The method of making the face is detailed in the same *Śilpaśāstra*.⁵⁴ The three varieties of *Daśatāla* system have been fully defined by Śrī Kumāra in the *Śilparatna*.⁵⁵ As regards the measurement of *Āṅgulas*, a detailed description is given in the *Śilpaśāstra* by Prasanna Kumar Acharya.⁵⁶

This is the detailed description of the face, which has an impressive recognition in iconography. But so far as the *Purāṇas* are concerned, they actually do not go to such an extent in connection with the face of a deity. While describing the face of the goddess Sarasvatī, they vary to a great extent. Like her father Brahmā, she is often mentioned as having one to four faces; but elsewhere she is also mentioned as having up to five faces.

According to the *Matsya-Purāṇa*,⁵⁷ like Brahmā, Brahmāṇī should have four faces. Similarly, in the *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, she (as *Prakṛti*) is described as having four heads.⁵⁸ According to the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī has only one face.⁵⁹

Śrī Sūtradhāra Maṇḍana, in his *Rūpamaṇḍana*, has described two forms of Sarasvatī, namely, Mahāvidyā and Sarasvatī. There, Mahāvidyā is said to have one face (*Ekavaktrā*).⁶⁰ Moreover, like

⁵³Prasanna Kumar Acharya, *Indian Architecture According to Mānasāra-Śilpaśāstra*, A Summary of the Mānasāra (London, 1927), pp. 78, 123

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, p. 84.

⁵⁵"The face is taken as the standard of the tāla measurement and is generally twelve āṅgulas or about nine inches in length. The face is stated to be of vocal shape (*kukkuṭāṇḍa-samākāra*, lit., 'shaped like the egg of a hen')." ⁵⁶*ŚīlR.*, V.I-114½; VI. 1.11½; VII. 1.42½

⁵⁷Prasanna Kumar Acharya, *Śilpa-Śāstra*, A Summary of the Mānasāra, developed out of a Dissertation accepted for the Ph. D. Degree, p. 35

"The paramāṇu or atom is the smallest unit of measurement.

8 paramāṇus	= 1 rathadhūli (lit. car-dust).
8 rathadhūlis	= 1 bālāgra (lit. hair's end).
8 bālāgras	= 1 liksha (lit. a nit).
8 likshās	= 1 yūkā (lit. a louse).
8 yūkās	= 1 yava (lit. a barley corn).
8 yavas	= 1 āṅgulas (lit. finger's breadth).

Three kinds of āṅgulas are distinguished by the largest of which is made of 8 yavas, the intermediate of 7 yavas, and the smallest one of 6 yavas."

⁵⁸MP., CCLXI. 24

⁵⁹VP., XXIII. 55

⁶⁰Cf. Dr Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 154

⁶¹Śrī Sūtradhāra Maṇḍana, *Rūpamaṇḍana* (Vārāṇasī, Saṁvat 2021), p. 88

Brahmā, Sarasvatī has also been depicted to have five faces. In this form, she has been named 'Śāradā'.⁶¹

Sarasvatī in Buddhism has some features similar and some dissimilar to those of Brāhmaṇic Sarasvatī. While describing the former's iconic character, it is emphasised that she may have either one or three faces.⁶² Like her, Vajrasarasvatī has also three faces—'vajrasarasvatīm trimukhām'.⁶³

Now the implication of one and four faces is to be seen. It is held that her face represents Sāvitrī or Gāyatrī.⁶⁴ It has been pointed out that Śārasvatī is called 'Saptasvasā';⁶⁵ having the seven metres as her sisters, and Gāyatrī is the foremost of all. All these metres separately or jointly symbolise not only the metre of the *Vedas*; but the *Veda* as a whole. This sense of one face of Sarasvatī tallies with the fact that *Vāk* is said to have been issued from Brahmā's mouth.⁶⁶ This *Vāk* may be said as symbolising the *Veda*, and Sarasvatī, who is prominently described in the *Purāṇas* as *Vāk* or *Vāgdevī* or the presiding deity of speech,⁶⁷ may be said as having embodied *Veda* itself as produced from the mouth of Brahmā.⁶⁸ The four faces of hers may also be taken as symbolising the four *Vedas* in the same way as do the four faces of Brahmā.⁶⁹

In the *Purāṇas*, it is widely held that Brahmā has created the whole universe. For this creation, he had pre-planning in his mind or intellect. This mind or intellect is nothing but the *Veda* which bears the cosmic feature endowed with fourfold nature.⁷⁰ This sense goes to the four *Vedas* and mind can be replaced by the fourfold nature or

⁶¹H. Krishna Sastri, *South Indian Images of Gods and Goddesses* (Madras, 1916), p. 187

⁶²Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, p. 349

⁶³*SādhMā.*, 163

⁶⁴Dr Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 154

⁶⁵*RV.*, VI. 61. 10

⁶⁶*BhāP.*, III. 12.26

⁶⁷*Cf. BvP.*, II. 4.75, 77, 78, 79, 84-85; *BrP.*, 101.11

⁶⁸Dr Rāmaśaṅkara Bhaṭṭācārya, *Purāṇāgata Vedaviṣayaka Sāmagrī kṛ Samikṣātmaka Adhyayana* (Prayāga, 1965), pp. 122, 378-379

⁶⁹Dr Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 140

⁷⁰"The four faces of Brahman represent the four *Vedas*; the eastern *Rgveda*, the southern *Yajurveda*, the western *Sāmaveda* and the northern *Atharva-veda*."

⁷¹Vasudeva S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, pp. 15, 28

creation. So, the four faces of Brahmā imply the four *Vedas*. Similarly, the four faces of Sarasvatī undoubtedly stand for the same fact; for she also is said as creating the universe.⁷¹

So far as the three faces are concerned, they may be taken as implying the three principal *Vedas*—the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda* and the *Sāmaveda*, excluding the *Atharvaveda*, which is supposed to be a later compendium. That is why she is called '*trayī vidyā*' representing those three *Vedas*. She, in fact, represents all the *Vidyās*, namely, *yajñavidyā*, *mahāvidyā*, *guhyavidyā*, *ātmavidyā*, *ānvikṣiki*, *trayivārtā* and *daṇḍantī*.⁷²

The conception of the five faces of Sarasvatī may be extended to the five *Vedas* in which the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is included, according to the new conception of the fifth *Veda*. It is said that Brahmā created this fifth *Veda* in the way as the four *Vedas*. Nay, it is more superior to the other *Vedas*; for it has their essence in it and embraces almost all the arts and sciences.⁷³ Thus, this *Veda* may be identified with the one face of Sarasvatī in the form of the *Veda*; because Sarasvatī herself is said to be closely related to the various arts and sciences.⁷⁴

2. THE NUMBER OF HANDS AND OBJECTS HELD BY THEM

The number of Sarasvatī's hands differs from place to place in the *Purāṇas*. It is really very interesting to take them all into account. In the *Purāṇas*, Sarasvatī is mostly alluded to as having four hands. But by some of her *Purāṇic* epithets like '*Vīṇāpustakadhārīṇī*',⁷⁵ she seems to have only two hands having a lute (*Vīṇā*) and book (*Pustaka*). The *Matsya-Purāṇa* while prescribing certain rules for making the images of various gods and goddesses, states that Sarasvatī, like Brahmā, should be made as having four hands.⁷⁶ Like the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, the

⁷¹Cf. *BvP.*, II.1.1, 4.4. It is said that Durgā, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī are the five Prakṛtis in creation of the world: "*ṣṣṭividhau prakṛtiḥ pañcadhā smṛtāḥ*."

⁷²*ViṣP.*, I.9. 120-121; *PdP.*, V.27.118; see also Ramaprasad Chand, *The Indo-Aryan Races, A Study of the Origin of the Indo-Aryan People and Institutions* (Rajshahi, 1916), pp. 228-230

⁷³*NāṭS.*, I. 15-16

⁷⁴John Dowson, *op. cit.*, p. 284

⁷⁵*BvP.*, II.1.35, 2.55

⁷⁶*MP.*, CCLXI. 24

Agni-Purāṇa also prescribes that the image of goddess Sarasvatī should be made as having a book (*Pustaka*), a rosary (*Akṣamālā*), a lute (*Viṇā*) and a lotus (*Kumbhābja*) is her respective hands.⁷⁷

In the *Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa*, as in the other *Purāṇas*, a number of references put forth her iconic character. At one place, she is described as having four hands. In her two right hands, she holds a book and a rosary while in her two left hands, she bears a water-vessel and a lute (*Viṇā*).⁷⁸ Elsewhere also she is pictured as having four hands; but the order of the emblems held in the right and the left hands differs. In the latter case, Sarasvatī is depicted as having a rosary and a trident in her two right hands and a book and a water-vessel in her left hands.⁷⁹ Thus, trident has been given the place of lute (*Viṇā*). At another place, she is mentioned as usual to have a book and a rosary in her right hands and a lute (*Vaiṇavī*) and a water-vessel (*Kamaṇḍalu*) in her left hands.⁸⁰ '*Vaiṇavī*' has been explained by Dr Kramrisch as *Vaiṣṇavī*⁸¹ and by Dr Priyabala Shah as the staff of the *Viṇā* made of bamboo.⁸²

In the *Brahmavaivarta-Purāṇa*, Sarasvatī is one of the five '*Prakṛtis*'.⁸³ The *Vāyu-Purāṇa*, while describing her as the '*Prakṛti Gau*', presents her as having four mouths, four horns, four teeth, four eyes and four hands.⁸⁴ Since she herself is 'the *Prakṛti Gau*', all the animals are born under her impression as four-footed and four-breasted.⁸⁵

In the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, an earthen image (*Pratimā*) is said to have been made by the King Ambuvīci. That image is described to have four hands with a lotus, a rosary, a water-vessel and a book in the

⁷⁷AP., L. 16

⁷⁸Cf. Dr Priyabala Shah. *op. cit.*, p. 225

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 227

⁸⁰*Ibid.*, p. 154

⁸¹Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 154. f. n. 1

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 154, "The word *Vaiṇavī* requires some clarification. I have amended the reading *Vaiṇavī* into *Viṇaiva* because Sarasvatī is traditionally known to carry *Viṇā* and not a flute of bamboo which is the usual meaning of the word *Vaiṇavī*. On further consideration, however, I find that it is necessary to change the reading into *Viṇaiva* because the word *Vaiṇavī* does not mean *Viṇā*. It indicates the staff of *Viṇā* which much have been made of bamboo as in the case of the present '*Ēkaṭārā*'."

⁸³B.P., II. I. 1, 4. 4

⁸⁴VP., XXIII. 44-45

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, XXIII. 88

respective hands.⁸⁶ This shows the fulfilment of the rules laid down by the *Purāṇas*, according to which the image of goddess Sarasvatī should be four-handed.

In Jainism, most of the *Vidyādevīs* are four-handed while in Buddhism, the case differs. The Buddhistic Sarasvatī is said to have either two arms or six arms, and in case, she is two armed, she has her four forms under different names.⁸⁷ She is also said to have eight⁸⁸ and even ten arms.⁸⁹

3. THE IMPLICATION OF THE OBJECTS HELD IN THE HANDS

The four arms of Sarasvatī, like her four faces, represent the four *Vedas*⁹⁰ and the *Kamaṇḍalu* represents the nectar of all the *Śāstras*.⁹¹ Since she symbolises the entire knowledge, she symbolises all the *Śāstras*, too. She holds a book in one of her hands and this also conveys the same sense.⁹² The *Skanda-Purāṇa* (VI. 46.19), while defining the book (*Pustaka*) in one of the hands of Sarasvatī, says : "*pustakaṁ ca tathā vāme sarvavidyāsamudbhavam*". All other concepts of Sarasvatī have developed from her watery form, e.g., Sarasvatī as a river,⁹³ and it is also maintained that Sarasvatī has created all the *Tanmātrās*,⁹⁴ which are but essential for the creation of the universe and of which water is one. As '*Prakṛti*', she is advocated to have created the universe.⁹⁵ The water is fundamentally necessary for this.

⁸⁶SkP., VI. 46. 16-19

⁸⁷Cf. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-351

⁸⁸VaiR., 15

⁸⁹H. Krishna Sastri, *op. cit.*, p. 187; also cf. *ŚāT.*, VI. 37

⁹⁰Dr Priyabala Shah, *op. cit.*, p. 184; *The Skanda-Purāṇa* (VII. 33.22) aptly calls her '*śrutilakṣaṇā*'

⁹¹*Ibid.*, p. 185

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 186; also cf. S. C. Diwakar, Seon, "Sarasvatī in Jain Iconography" *Summaries of Papers*, Part I, AIOC, XXIII Session—Aligarh (1966), p. 174. "In the Jain iconography Sarasvatī is shown adorned with four hands having a book, a water-vessel, a rosary and the fourth empty. Here book has been understood for the *Śāstra* (Right Knowledge), rosary for Right Faith or Devotion, water-vessel for the ideal of sainthood or Right conduct and empty hand indicates the supreme path of nirvikalpa samādhi."

⁹³OST., Vol. V, pp. 338-339; also cf. H.H. Wilson. *The Viṣṇu Purāṇa, A System of Hindu Mythology and Tradition* (Calcutta, 1961), pp. LXIV-LXV.

⁹⁴Vasudeva S. Agarwala. *op. cit.*, p. 53

⁹⁵BvP., II. 1.1. 4.4

purpose. It is, probably, for this reason that she has water in her water-vessel and, thus, she denotes her earliest association with water. This water may not be thought of as ordinary; it is divine (*Divya*) and it is only in this capacity that it may be thought to have been kept in the water-vessel of Sarasvatī.⁹⁶

Similarly, the lute (*Viṇā*) held by Sarasvatī is also not less important. It is held that the lute represents a kind of achievement or proficiency (*Siddhi*).⁹⁷ The close relation of the lute and the book cannot be ignored. Sarasvatī, no doubt, represents the principles of speech and for this very reason, she has been identified with speech (*vāgvai sarasvatī*) in the *Brāhmaṇas*.⁹⁸ Now, this speech can reasonably be divided into sound (*Dhvanī*) and word (*Pada* and *Vākya*). The book in the hand of Sarasvatī also represents, besides what is said earlier, the second element, while the lute in her hand represents the first element. Only the lute and no other musical instrument has been described in the hand of the goddess. The lute is the most ancient musical instrument and finds mention in the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (III.2.4.6). Melody helps mental concentration. The lute is the best instrument for this purpose; because it is highly useful for producing soma song.⁹⁹ Moreover, the goddess is said to have a rosary (*Akṣamālā*) in one of her hands. This rosary in the hand of the goddess usually represents time.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶*SkP.*, VI. 46.19

⁹⁷Dr Priyabala Shah, op. cit., p. 186

⁹⁸*ŚBr.*, IV. 2.5.14, 6.3.3

⁹⁹Cf. *DBhāP.*, III. 30.2

¹⁰⁰Dr Priyabala Shah, op. cit., p. 185

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| 11. Bhūtabhāvana | (V. 35.177) |
| 12. Bhūtabhavyabhavannātha | (V. 35.164) |
| 13. Bhūtātma | (V. 4.127) |
| 14. Brahmarūpa | (V. 2.85) |
| 15. Brahmaidāṁ Vara | (V. 35.180) |
| 16. Caturmukha | (V. 1.48, 14.88, 35.174) |
| 17. Daṇḍi | (V. 35.168) |
| 18. Darbhapāṇi | (V. 35.168) |
| 19. Deva | (V. 2.62, 14.126) |
| 20. Devadeva | (V. 35.179) |
| 21. Devadeveśa | (V. 35.164) |

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| 22. Devagarbha | (V. 14.128) |
| 23. Devanātha | (V. 35.163) |
| 24. Dharmādhyakṣa | (V. 35.177) |
| 25. Dhātā | (V. 3 or 35.194) |
| 26. Diśān Pati | (V. 35.174) |
| 27. Guhya | (V. 2.86) |
| 28. Guru | (V. 14.179, 35.169) |
| 29. Haṁsaketu | (V. 35.168) |
| 30. Hiraṇyagarbha | (V. 14.88, 35.166) |
| 31. Īśvara | (V. 35.165) |
| 32. Jagaddhātā | (V. 35.177) |
| 33. Jagatpati | (V. 4.131, 35.163) |
| 34. Jalajotphullapatrākṣa | (V. 14.126) |
| 35. Jalālaya | (V. 14.126) |
| 36. Jaṭi | (V. 35.168) |
| 37. Jyeṣṭhasāmaga | (V. 35.170) |
| 38. Kamaṇḍaludhara | (V. 35.170) |
| 39. Kālarūpeṇa Saṁsthit | (V. 2.86) |
| 40. Lokadhārī | (V. 4.83) |
| 41. Lokaguru | (V. 4.106) |
| 42. Lokakartā | (V. 35.163) |
| 43. Lokakṛt | (V. 2.2) |
| 44. Lokānām Prabhava | (V. 4.115) |
| 45. Lokanātha | (V. 35.163) |
| 46. Lokapitāmaha | (V. 18.52, 28.23, 54, 56, 58, etc.) |
| 47. Lokaśākṣī | (V. 2.3) |
| 48. Lokatattvajña | (V. 2.2) |
| 49. Mahādaṇḍī | (V. 35.166) |
| 50. Mahānāḍī | (V. 35.166) |
| 51. Nitya | (V. 2.86) |

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| 52. Nṛvarma | (V. 35.177) |
| 53. Padmagarbha | (V. 14.128, 35.166) |
| 54. Padmaja | (V. 14.179) |
| 55. Padmajanma | (V. 4.102) |
| 56. Padmākṣa | (V. 4.102) |
| 57. Padmavāsi | (V. 4.102, 35.172) |
| 58. Padmavīryak | (V. 4.102) |
| 59. Padmayoni | (V. 14.100) |
| 60. Paramātmā | (V. 2.83) |
| 61. Piṅgalalocana | (V. 35.164) |
| 62. Pitāmaha | (V. 2.83, 4.26, 35.180, etc.) |
| 63. Pradhānapuruṣa | (V. 4.128) |
| 64. Puruṣarūpeṇa Saṁsthit | (V. 2.86) |
| 65. Puruṣeṣvakṣaya | (V. 4.128) |
| 66. Ṛṣiṇāmuttama | (V. 4.136) |
| 67. Sargakarttā | (V. 2.116) |
| 68. Sarvabhūtasthit | (V. 4.30) |
| 69. Sarvabhūtātmā | (V. 4.127) |
| 70. Sarvabhūteśa | (V. 2.116, 4.134) |
| 71. Sarvalokapitāmaha | (V. 4.86) |
| 72. Sarvarūpadhṛk | (V. 2.113, 4.129) |
| 73. Sarveśa | (V. 4.130) |
| 74. Sattvabhuk | (V. 2.111) |
| 75. Sattvastha | (V. 14.90) |
| 76. Sāvitṛpati | (V. 35.172) |
| 77. Sikhi | (V. 35.168) |
| 78. Sraṣṭā | (V. 35.169) |
| 79. Sṛṣṭikartā | (V. 14.125) |
| 80. Sruksruvādidhara | (V. 35.170) |
| 81. Supāṅkaja | (V. 35.171) |
| 82. Surādhyakṣa | (V. 35.169) |
| 83. Surāsurguru | (V. 18.52) |
| 84. Surāsuranamaskṛta | (V. 35.164) |
| 85. Svarṇagarbha | (V. 14.28) |

86. Trailokyaguru	(V. 35.165)
87. Tribhuvanaguru	(V. 1.1)
88. Triveda	(V. 35.178)
89. Vedagarbha	(V. 35.166)
90. Vedakartā	(V. 35.167)
91. Vedasraṣṭā	(V. 35.174)
92. Vibhu	(V. 1.48, 50; 2.79)
93. Virañci	(V. 14.5, 94, 35.164)
94. Virāṭ	(V. 1.55, 4.128)
95. Yogvit	(V. 2.2)

2. THE BRAHMAVAIVARTA-PURĀṆA

1. Caturānana	(I. 8.62)
2. Caturbhuja	(II. 15.41)
3. Caturmukha	(I. 3.31; II. 15.21)
4. Caturṇām Vedānā Jñātām	(I. 3.34)
5. Dhātā	(I. 3.33; 8.10, 12, 16)
6. Harṣavāhana	(II. 15.21)
7. Jagatām Dhātā	(I. 24.47)
8. Jagatām Pati	(I. 7.17, 8.18)
9. Jagatām Vidhātā	(II. 15.21)
10. Jagadguru	(I. 8.50)
11. Jagatkartā	(II. 15.21)
12. Jagatpati	(I. 8.29, 49)
13. Jagatsraṣṭā	(I. 18.12)
14. Jñānavidām Vara	(I. 24.42)
15. Kamalodbhava	(I. 24.42; II. 38.2-3)
16. Kamaṇḍaludhara	(I. 3.30)
17. Kartā	(I. 3.33)
18. Kṛpānidhi	(I. 3.34)

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| 19. Mahātapasvī | (I. 3.30) |
| 20. Mahāyogi | (I. 4.13) |
| 21. Paṇḍita | (I. 8.51) |
| 22. Paṅkaja | (II. 38.56) |
| 23. Pātā | (I. 22.23) |
| 24. Pitāmaha | (I. 8.29, 56, 22.3; II. 15.26) |
| 25. Prabhu | (I. 7.8, 8.19) |
| 26. Purāṇatattvajña | (I. 22.22) |
| 27. Rājasa | (I. 8.20) |
| 28. Sarasvatikānta | (I. 3.34) |
| 29. Sarvajña | (I. 23.38) |
| 30. Sarvasampadām Pradātā | (I. 3.33) |
| 31. Sarveṣām Guru | (I. 3.31) |
| 32. Sarveṣām Janaka | (I. 3.31) |
| 33. Śilpināmīśa | (I. 3.31) |
| 34. Sraṣṭā | (I. 3.33, 8.50, 22.22, 23, 23.1) |
| 35. Svātmārāmeśvara | (I. 23.38, 44) |
| 36. Śukladanta | (I. 3.31) |
| 37. Śuklakeśa | (I. 3.31) |
| 38. Śuklavāsāḥ | (I. 3.31) |
| 39. Sureśvara | (I. 4.14) |
| 40. Tapasām Phaladātā | (I. 3.32) |
| 41. Tāpasviśa | (I. 8.50) |
| 42. Tāta | (I. 8.50) |
| 43. Vedaprasūpati | (I. 3.33) |
| 44. Vidhātā | (I. 3.33, 8.17-18) |
| 45. Vidhi | (I. 7.7, 8.28, 66; II. 38.3) |
| 46. Vibhu | (II. 38.3) |
| 47. Vṛddha | (I. 3.30) |
| 48. Yogindrāṇām Gurorguru | (I. 23.44) |
| 49. Yogīśa | (I. 3.31) |

3. THE KURMA-PURĀṆA

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| 1. Ādikartā Bhūtānām | (I. 4.38) |
| 2. Ādipuruṣa | (I. 9.69) |
| 3. Anagha | (I. 9.75) |
| 4. Brahmasaṅjñit | (I. 4.37) |
| 5. Chhandamūrti | (I. 4.39) |
| 6. Devadeva | (I. 9.34, 44.1) |
| 7. Deveśa | (I. 9.46) |
| 8. Deveśvareśāna | (I. 44.3) |
| 9. Dhātā | (I. 9.20, 33, etc.) |
| 10. Haṁsa | (I. 4.39) |
| 11. Hiraṇyagarbha | (I. 4.39) |
| 12. Jaganmaya | (I. 9.36) |
| 13. Jagatyoni | (I. 9.29) |
| 14. Kalyāṇa | (I. 9.47) |
| 15. Kamalodbhava | (I. 9.70) |
| 16. Kanakāṇḍaja | (I. 4.49, 9.28) |
| 17. Kapila | (I. 4.39) |
| 18. Kṣetrajña | (I. 4.37) |
| 19. Kuśadhva | (I. 9.25) |
| 20. Lokamaheśvara | (I. 9.39) |
| 21. Lokatantrī | (I. 9.32) |
| 22. Mahābrahmā | (II. 44.5) |
| 23. Padmagarbbhasamadyuti | (I. 9.29) |
| 24. Padmayoni | (I. 9.36) |
| 25. Prabhu | (I. 9.19) |
| 26. Prajāpati | (I. 44.3) |
| 27. Prapitāmaha | (I. 9.20, 33) |

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| 28. Puruṣa | (I. 4.48, 39) |
| 29. Puruṣarṣabha | (I. 9.24) |
| 30. Putraka | (I. 9.75) |
| 31. Sanātana | (I. 4.39) |
| 32. Śarīrī | (I. 4.38) |
| 33. Sarvalokānātmā | (I. 9.39) |
| 34. Satyavikrama | (I. 9.26) |
| 35. Svayambhū | (I. 9.20, 33) |
| 36. Vedanidhi | (I. 9.19) |
| 37. Vedhasa | (I. 44.1) |
| 38. Vidhātā | (I. 9.20, 33) |
| 39. Viśvabhāvana | (I. 44.22) |
| 40. Viśvātmā | (I. 9.69, 44.2, 3) |
| 41. Viśvatomukha | (I. 9.20) |
| 42. Viśveśa | (I. 9.30) |
| 43. Yoga'uktātmā | (I. 44.4) |

4. THE MTSYA-PURĀṆA

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| 1. Amarāṇām Pitāmaha | (III. 2) |
| 2. Caturbāhu | (CCLX. 41) |
| 3. Caturānana | (IV. 14) |
| 4. Caturmukha | (IV. 7; CCLX. 40) |
| 5. Daṇḍadhara | (CCLX. 42) |
| 6. Deva | (III. 43) |
| 7. Divyayajñopavitin | (CCLX. 43) |
| 8. Haṁsārūḍha | (CCLX. 40) |
| 9. Kamalāsana | (CCLX.40) |

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| 10. Kamaṇḍaludhara | (CCLX. 40) |
| 11. Lokapitāmaha | (III. 1) |
| 12. Mānada | (IV. 13) |
| 13. Mṛgacarmadhara | (CCLX. 43) |
| 14. Oṅkāra | (CXIV. 7) |
| 15. Padmabhū | (IV. 1) |
| 16. Padmagarbhābha | (CCLX. 41) |
| 17. Paitāmaha | (CCLX. 45) |
| 18. Prabhu | (III. 40) |
| 19. Prajāpati | (III. 33; IV. 8, 11, etc.) |
| 20. Vedarāśi | (IV. 10) |
| 21. Vedavidāṁ Vara | (III. 1) |
| 22. Vibhu | (III. 33, 43; IV. 15, 16; |
| 23. Viraūci | CCLX. 43, etc.) |
| | (IV. 8, 13, etc.) |
| 24. Viśvasya "tamā | (CLIV. 7) |
| 25. Viśvātmā | (III. 41) |
| 26. Sarvadevānāmaḍhiṣṭhāā | (IV. 7) |
| 27. Satvamūrti | (CLIV. 7) |
| 28. Sruva | (CCLX. 42) |
| 29. Śubhekṣaṇa | (CCLX. 41) |
| 30. Śuklāambaradhara | (CCLX. 43) |

5. *THE VIṢṆUDHARMOTTARA-PURĀṆA (BARODA ED.)*

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| 1. Apratima | (XLVI. 19; LXIII.3) |
| 2. Baddhapadmāsana | (XLIV. 5) |

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| 3. Caturmukha | (XLIV. 5; LXIII. 1) |
| 4. Caturvāhu | (XLIV. 6) |
| 5. Deva | (XLIV. 5) |
| 6. Devavara | (XLVI. 7) |
| 7. Jagatpradhāna | (XLVI. 19) |
| 8. Jaṭādhara | (XLVI. 6) |
| 9. Kāla | (XLVI. 11) |
| 10. Kṛṣṇājīnāmbara | (XLVI. 5) |
| 11. Padmapatradalāgrābha | (XLVI. 8) |
| 12. Padmapatrāsanastha | (LXIII. 1) |
| 13. Parameṣṭhi | (XLVI. 13, 18) |
| 14. Pitāmaha | (LXIII. 3) |
| 15. Prajāpati | (LXXIII. 44) |
| 16. Ṛgveda | (LXXIII. 43) |
| 17. Sarvabhūtanamaskṛta | (XLVI. 7) |
| 18. Sarvajaganmaya | (XLVI. 19) |
| 19. Sarvalakṣaṇayukta | (XLVI. 8) |
| 20. Sarvābharanadhārī | (XLVI. 7) |
| 21. Śāntarūpa | (XLVI. 8) |
| 22. Toṣya | (XLVI. 5) |

6. THE VĀMANA-PURĀṆA

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| 1. Amalasattvavṛti | (LXV. 12) |
| 2. Avyaktajanman | (XXIII. 22. 39) |
| 3. Avyayātmaka | (LXVI. 5) |
| 4. Devavara | (LXVI. 14) |

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| 5. Deveśa | (XXIII. 22.73) |
| 6. Dhīman | (XXIII. 22.40) |
| 7. Kamalāsana | (LXVI. 5) |
| 8. Kamalāsanaṣṭha | (XXIII. 1.4) |
| 9. Lokaguru | (XXIII. 28.31) |
| 10. Lokapitāmaha | (XXIII. 22.35, 28.3, 10, 35.33) |
| 11. Mahāyogī | (XXXV. 31) |
| 12. Padmajanman | (XXIII. 28.2) |
| 13. Paramātman | (XXIII. 22.28) |
| 14. Satyavādin | (XXIII. 4.17) |
| 15. Surapati | (XXXV. 39) |
| 16. Vedhasa | (XXIII. 28.5) |
| 17. Vibhu | (XXXV. 48) |
| 18. Yogācārya | (XXXV. 51) |

7. THE BRAHMA-PURĀṆA

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| 1. Abjayoniḥ | (I. 30) |
| 2. Aja | (XXX. 53) |
| 3. Ambujāsana | (CI. 15) |
| 4. Avyaya | (LIX. 22) |
| 5. Caturmukha | (XXVI. 31) |
| 6. Deva | (LVIII. 8, 10; LXVII. 9; LXVIII. 9) |
| 7. Devadeva | (LIX. 22) |
| 8. Deveśa | (XXVI. 36; XXX. 2; LXIX. 5) |

9. Hiranyavarṇa (I. 41)
10. Īśvara (XXVI. 31)
11. Jagadādhāra (XXVI. 31)
12. Jagadvandya (XXVI. 31)
13. Jagadyoni (XXVI. 31; LXX. 14)
14. Jagannātha (XXVI. 31; LIX. 4, 9)
15. Jagatpati (XXVI. 31; XXX. 1; XLV. 111; LVIII. 9; LXVI. 3, 4; LXIX. 1; LXX. 14)
16. Kamalōdbhava (LXV. 1)
17. Nātha (XXVII. 13)
18. Narāyaṇaparāyaṇa (I. 34)
19. Pitāmaha (I. 30; LXIX. 8)
20. Pitara (XXVI. 35)
21. Prabhu (I. 41; XXIX. 3; XXXIV. 8, 14, 51; LXVIII. 2)
22. Prajāpati (XXXI. 28; XLIII. 18, etc.)
23. Prapitāmaha (LVIII. 11; LXIII. 10, etc.)
24. Sāśvata (XXX. 53)
25. Sarvabhutānām Sraṣṭā (I. 34)
26. Sarvasya mātā pitā (XXX. 55)
27. Sureśvara (XXVI. 37)
28. Surottama (LXIX. 7; LXXVIII. 1)
29. Suraśreṣṭha (XXVIII. 10; XXIX. 1, 3, 6; XXX. 1, 5; XLIII. 16, 20)
30. Svayambhū (I. 41)
31. Trailokyaprabhava (LIX. 22)
32. Vadatāmvara (XXIX. 3)
33. Vibhudhaśreṣṭha (LXIX. 9)
34. Vidhividāmvara (LXV. 1)

8. THE MĀRKAṆDEYA-PURĀṆA¹

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| 1. Acintyātman | (XLIII. 8) |
| 2. Ādideva | (IV.40) |
| 3. Ādikṛta | (XLIV. 1) |
| 4. Ādikartā Bhātānām | (XII. 64) |
| 5. Ādipuruṣa | (XII. 28) |
| 6. Aḡuṇa | (XLI. 13; XLIII. 13) |
| 7. Aja | (XLII. 27) |
| 8. Ajara | (XLII. 33) |
| 9. Akṣaya | (XLII. 33) |
| 10. Ameya | (XLII 42.33) |
| 11. Anādi | (XLII. 34; XLIII. 21) |
| 12. Anādimat | (XLIII. 8) |
| 13. Anaupamya | (XLII. 28) |
| 14. Aparā-Kriya | (XLIII. 8) |
| 15. Asāmprata | (XLII. 34) |
| 16. Āśraya | (XLII. 27) |
| 17. Avijñeya | (XLII. 34) |
| 18. Avyakta Janman | (XLII. 20, etc.) |
| 19. Avyaya | (XLII. 27, etc.) |
| 20. Bhagavān | (XLIV. 1, etc.) |
| 21. Bhū-padma-karṇikā-saṃstha | (XLI. 21) |
| 22. Brahmā | (I. 44, etc.) |
| 23. Brahavidāṃ Śreṣṭha | (CI. 12) |
| 24. Carācara-guru | (XLVIII. 13) |
| 25. Carācarasya Jagataḥ Dhātā | (XLII. 27) |
| 26. Caturmukha | (XLIII. 20) |
| 27. Deva | (XLIV. 1, etc.) |
| 28. Devadeva | (XLIII. 20) |

¹Quoted from Miss Nileshvari Y. Desai, *Ancient Indian Society, Religion and Mythology As Depicted In the Mārkaṇḍeya—Purāṇa (A Critical Study)*-(Baroda, 1968), pp. 206-207

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| 29. Devādi | (XLIII. 21) |
| 30. Dhimat | (XLII. 29, etc.) |
| 31. Dhruva | (XLII. 33) |
| 32. Guṇa-rūpa-rasairhīna | (XLII. 33) |
| 33. Hiraṇyagarbha | (XLII. 29, etc.) |
| 34. Jagadādi | (XLIII. 8) |
| 35. Jagadīśa | (XLIV. 37) |
| 36. Jagadyoni | (XLII. 19, etc.) |
| 37. Jagannātha | (XLII. 19) |
| 38. Jagataḥ Prabhavāpyayaḥ | (XLV. 4) |
| 39. Jagato gatiḥ | (XCIII. 7) |
| 40. Jagatpati | (XLIII. 9, etc.) |
| 41. Jagatpūrva | (XLIII. 20) |
| 42. Jagat-sūtakara | (XCVIII. 10) |
| 43. Kamalodbhava | (CX. 2) |
| 44. Kṣetrajña | (XLII. 72) |
| 45. Lokakṛt | (XLIV. 2) |
| 46. Lokapitāmaha | (XLVII. 40, etc.) |
| 47. Lokatantrin | (XLI. 29) |
| 48. Mahātman | (XLI. 1, etc.) |
| 49. Nānya-saṁśraya | (XLII. 33) |
| 50. Nārāyaṇa | (XLIV. 4, 5) |
| 51. Padma-sambhava | (C. 14) |
| 52. Padma-yoni | (XLII. 19, etc.) |
| 53. Pañkaja-janman | (XLVIII. 97, etc.) |
| 54. Para | (XLIII. 8) |
| 55. Parama Pada | (XLII. 2) |
| 56. Parameṣṭhi | (XLVI. 64, etc.) |
| 57. Parameśvara | (XLIII. 9) |
| 58. Pareśa | (XLIII. 7) |

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| 59. Pati | (XLIV. 1) |
| 60. Pitāmaḥ | (XLIII. 8, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 61. Prabhavāpyaya | (XLII. 34) |
| 62. Prabhu | (XLIV. 3, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 63. Prajāpati | (XLIV. 1, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 64. Śabda-sparsa-vivarjita | (XLII. 33) |
| 65. Sarva-brahmamaya | (XLVII. 40) |
| 66. Sarvaga | (XLIV. 8) |
| 67. Sarvahetu | (XLIII. 8) |
| 68. Sarva-sambhava | (XLIV. 8) |
| 69. Śāśvat | (XLIV. 2, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 70. Śuddha | (XLVII. 40) |
| 71. Svayambhū | (XLIII. 17, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 72. Trigūṇa | (XLII. 34) |
| 73. Veda-yajñamaya | (XLIV. 8) |
| 74. Vedhas | (LXX. 68) |
| 75. Vibhu | (XLIV. 8, <i>etc.</i>) |
| 76. Yogamūrtimat | (XLIII. 10) |

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF PLATES

Plate I. *Abaneri* :

Abaneri or Abhanagari is four miles away from the Bandikui Railway Station in Jaipur Distt., Rajasthan. In the 9th Century A.D., the Harshātmatha Temple was constructed at Abaneri and the builder of that temple is unknown. This temple was the centre of the Shakti cult. Now, the old temple is no more in existence. A new temple has come up in its place, the inner walls of which, depict various images of deities. In that continuation, a panel of three gods is found. The images are on the walls. It, therefore, appears that Brahmā has only three faces. He is in extreme right and is in standing posture. He stands on a lotus-seat and wears usual *Heṭus*.

Brahmā

Quite late of the 9th century A.D.,
Abaneri, Jaipur Distt.
Rajasthan.

Plate II. *Ahar* :

The Meera and Mahavir Temples are built at Ahar, which is situated near the city of Udaipur. The Meera Temple dates back to about the 10th century A.D. Both, the Meera and Mahavir Temples are contemporary to the Nagda Temples and they resemble the design of the Ambika Temple at Jagat.

In the Meera Temple, the image of standing Brahmā is found in the Tribhaṅga pose. He wears a *Mukutā* on his head, a sacred thread across his shoulders, and bears a beard. He is adorned with a girdle (*Mekhalā*). He is two handed, but the hands are not distinct. There are many devouts around him.

Brahmā

The Meera Temple, probably 1,000 Century A.D.,
Ahar, Rajasthan.

Plate III. Ahar :

The Meera Temple stands in Udaipur, Rajasthan. It is one of the famous temples of the state. An image of Brahmā is there and it is known as the Meera Temple sculpture in the Tank Wall.

The image is in sitting posture. In this posture, Brahmā has four faces and four arms. The heads are covered with the *Jaṭāmukuta*s. The god has a *staff*, a rosary, a book and probably a jar in his hands. Besides, usual ornaments, such as earrings, armlets, wristlets, anklets, etc., adorn the various limbs of the god. His famous vehicle is at the feet of the Lord. No other deities are shown near the god. The image is one of the beautiful images of the god.

Brahmā

The Mewar dynasty,
Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Plate IV. Aihole :

At Aihole, there are some cave temples and other temples. Some of them resemble the northern temple style. A movement lasted from the 6th century A.D. to the 8th century A.D. at Aihole to make temples on the lines of the Northern Indian temples. During the 6th and 7th century A.D., many temples developed at Aihole. The Huchchappayya-gudi temple is at Aihole, which is a *nirandhara* (one without ambulatory around the shrine). In this temple, Brahmā is shown in the ceiling. He has three faces and four hands and is seated on his vehicle. A singularity is worth noting here. In iconography, we generally see that the vehicle of Brahmā is shown near his image. Here, Brahmā practically rides the swan, which is seated over a lotus like a *vimāna* (aeroplane). Brahmā's sitting posture is also peculiar from other images. It seems that he is about to move on the back of the swan. He wears usual emblems. Ṛṣis are shown worshipping the god.

Brahmā

Chalukyan, 6th-7th century A.D.,

Aihole, Bijapur Distt.,

Plate V. Aihole :

At Aihole, in the Kunti Temple, too, Brahmā is shown in the ceiling. He is sitting on a double lotus-seat with one hand in the *Varada Mudrā*. The next frontal hand has a rosary. Objects in the opposite hands are not distinct. Brahmā has four heads covered with high *Jaṭāmukūṭas*. He wears a beautiful round necklace and a sacred thread. The image is not explicit.

Brahmā

Chalukyan, 6th-7th century A.D.,
Aihole, Bijapur Dist.,
Karnataka.

Plate VI. Alampur Museum :

Many early temples in the Deccan are in Northern Indian style. Temples as such are built at Aihole, Badami, Alampur, Patadkal and Mahakuteshwar. The Alampur temples resemble the early mediæval temples of North India. Alampur has a group of temples—nine in number, which are in northern Indian style and they belong to circa 8th century.

A life-size image of Brahmā is preserved in the Alampur Museum. In image form, Brahmā stands on a lotus-seat. He has four faces and four hands. Usual *Hetus* are in the hands of the god. The image is bulky and dwarf-sized.

Brahmā

6th-8th century A.D.,
Alampur Museum,
Distt. Mahbubnagar, (A. P.)

Plate VII. Alampur :

An attractive image of Brahmā is found in the ceiling of the gate at Alampur. It has three faces and four hands. Emblems in the hands are not distinct. Brahmā stands on a fully blown lotus. The *Jaṭāmukūṭas* are of round shape. The god wears a *Dhotī* and the usual ornaments. There are four other images—two on the left side and the rest on the right side of the god.

Brahmā

6th-8th century A.D. (Approximately),
Alampur, Distt. Mahbubnagar, (A. P.)

Plate VIII. *Allahabad Museum :*

The Allahabad Museum was established in 1931. Its sculpture-collection includes the sculptures from Khajuraho, Kau-āmbī, Mathura and some of the Gandhāra school. A standing image of Brahmā is kept in this Museum. It has four faces and four hands. The left hands are partly damaged. The frontal right hand is kept in the *Varada Mudra* and the opposite has a staff. Two female images are to the right and left of the god.

Brahmā

Allahabad Museum,
Allahabad, U.P. (India)

Plate IX. *Allahabad :*

The Garhwa fort, Allahabad has a sitting image of Brahmā. This image has four faces and four hands. No emblems are shown in the frontal hands. They are folded in an unusual manner, in which generally other images of the god are not found. His vehicle is shown on the right side and some images are shown as eulogising the god. The god has a small beard and his eyes are closed in meditation. The image has a fine finishing.

Brahmā

Garhwa Fort,
Allahabad, U.P.,
India.

Plate X. *Almora :*

Bajinath is now a village which is lying in north latitude $29^{\circ} 54' - 24''$ and east longitude $79^{\circ} 37'$ at an elevation of 3,545 feet above the sea level. There is a large temple, which is dedicated to Kālī. There are many other temples, which are in ruins and are used now as store rooms. There is a godown, which is possessed of many old sculptures, collected from various places. Most sculptures are of modern Hindu region. Bajinath is lying in the Katyur Valley and in ancient time, it was the home of the Katyuri Kings.

A seated image of Brahmā is in the godown of the sculptures at Bajinath, Distt. Almora, U.P. It is four-faced. It has four hands having a jar, a book, a staff and the fourth with rosary.

The Mrūti has nice garlands, earrings, armlets and bangles. Brahmā as such, sits in the *Padmāsana* posture. His eyes are half-closed in meditation. He wears a *Mukuta*. Two other images are on the top of this image—one on the left side and the other on the right. His vehicle, i.e., the swan is on his left side.

Brahmā

Probably 8th Century A.D.,
Bajjnath, Almora, U.P.

Plate XI. Amber Museum :

A life-size image of Brahmā is preserved in the Amber Museum, Rajasthan. It is a four-faced and four-handed image. One frontal hand is half damaged and the other frontal hand seems in the *Abhaya* pose. In the opposite hands, the god has a book and a staff. He wears usual ornaments. His vehicle, the swan is on the left side of the god. In past, Amber had been the capital of the princely state of Jaipur. "Apart from the captivating natural charm, Amber has been a prominent place for the tourists for its centuries-old palatial buildings and sculptural art, which are mostly adorned with the Mughal or Medieval sculpture."

Brahmā

Medieval Period,
Amber Museum,
Rajasthan.

Plate XII. Belur :

"The Chenna-Keśava temple at Belur was built by Hoysala Vishṇuvardhana in 1117, and the name of the consecrated deity was Vijaya Nārāyaṇa. It is the principal temple in a complex of later temples, all inside a spacious courtyard surrounded by a cloister and compound with a gopura-entrance on the east, now replaced with a modern superstructure".

An extremely beautiful image of Brahmā is found in this temple. It is a masterpiece of the time. The image is fully ornamented and is four-faced and four-handed with usual emblems. A single *Jatāmukuta* covers all heads. The vehicle of Brahmā is on the left side of the god.

Brahmā

The Chenna-Kesava Temple,
11th-12th Century A.D.,
Belur, Tamil Nadu.

Plate XIII. *Bhubeneśvara* :

The Bhubeneśvara State Museum was originally at Cuttak. In 1932, it was installed at Bhubeneśvara. Wood-carvings, stone and metal sculptures, palm-leaf manuscripts, pre-historic tools, etc., are displayed here. A stone-image of Brahmā is a pride collection, which dates back to the 8th Century A.D. It is in standing pose and has four arms and four heads. In this pose, Brahmā wears a *Jatāmukūta* and has a full beard. The image is simple as it has no usual ornaments

Brahmā

8th Century A.D.,
Bhubeneśvara Museum,
Orissa.

Plate XIV *Dārāsūram* :

The later Cholas made some temples in Thanjavur Distt. (Tamil Nadu). Noted of them are the Rājarājeśvara and the Kampahareśvara Temples. The former was built by Rājarāja II (1146-73) and the latter by Kulotuṅgā III (1178-1223). The Rājarājeśvara Temple is now known as the Airāvateśvara, which was built at Dārāsūram.

An image of Brahmā made by a Chola King is found at Dārāsūram. It is a seated image, which is four-faced and four-handed. It is on a lotus-seat. Rosary, trident, water-vessel and staff are kept in the different hands of the god. The heads are covered with high *Jaṭāmukūṣas*. He wears earrings, armlets, sacred thread and anklets. It is a beautiful image of high skill.

Brahmā

Chola, 13th Century A.D.,
Dārāsūram,
Thanjavur Distt.,
Tamil Nadu.

Plate XV. Ellora, Cave No. 16 :

Cave No. 16 of Ellora has got a central shrine, in which Brahmā sits on a lotus-seat. He is four handed and has three heads. All heads have *Jaṭāmukutaś*. His one left hand is damaged, while the other left hand holds something, which is not distinct. His one right hand is in the *Varada Mudrā* and the other right hand holds probably a jar. He is shown seated on a double lotus-seat. He wears ear-rings, wristlets, armlets, and a sacred thread. Some deities are shown worshipping him.

Brahmā

Cave No. 16,

Central Shrine,

Ellora,

Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XVI. Ellora, Cave No. 16 :

Here is a standing image of Brahmā. He has four hands and three heads. The right hand is in the *Abhaya Mudrā*. The other hand holds something, which is indistinct. The left hand is in *Kalyavalambita* pose and the other holds a *Kamaṇḍalu*. Brahmā wears a *Jaṭāmukutaś*, sacred thread, armlets, wristlets and ear-rings. There is a goose on his right hand side.

Brahmā

Cave No. 16,

E. Corridor 23,

Ellora,

Mahārāṣṭra

Plate XVII. Ellora, Cave No. 16 :

On Kailash Temple's screen wall, the guardians of the quarters are depicted. They guard the temple, which is the abode of Śiva, to whom they pay their respectful homage. Front piece on top is facing east Brahmā. Brahmā is in standing pose, having two hands and four faces. The hands are not distinct. He wears a sacred thread across his shoulder. Around him, worshippers are shown worshipping him.

Brahmā
Cave No. 16,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XVIII. *Ellora :*

Still, another image of *Brahmā* is found in Cave No. 16 of Ellora. In the form of such an image, *Brahmā* is in standing posture. He has four heads and four hands. His image is partly damaged. He stands on a lotus-seat. His image is simple in the sense that he has no ornaments on his body. Two other images are to the left of the god—one in standing posture with damaged face. The other is half-sized. Probably, they are not the consorts of *Brahmā*.

Brahmā
Cave No. 16,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XIX. *Ellora, Cave No. 27 :*

In the Cave No. 27 of Ellora, there is a small figure of *Viṣṇu* on the left side of the Verandah. *Viṣṇu* is depicted here as *Vārāha*. *Śeṣaśāyī Nārāyaṇa*'s damaged figure is on the right side. The central hall leads to three cells. Three *Dwārapālas* are shown guarding the door of the shrine.

In this cave, there are three deities in a standing pose. *Brahmā* is on the right side. He is four-faced and four-handed. One right hand is in *Abhaya Mudrā*. The things held in other left hands are not clear. He wears a girdle (*Mekhala*) in the waist, sacred thread across the shoulder, wristlets, armlets and *Jaṭāmukuṭas*. *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva* are on his left side.

Brahmā
along with *Viṣṇu* and *Śiva*,
Cave No. 27,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XX. *Ellora, Cave No. 29 :*

Cave No. 29 of Ellora is a cave temple dedicated to *Śiva*. In the cave, there are various panels, which are related to *Śiva*.

This cave resembles Elephanta in many respects. Usually, the visitors are impressed by the cave and its sculptures. The cave is datable to the 8th Century A.D.

Here, an image of Brahmā is found in standing pose. He is four-faced and four-handed. In one of the hands, he bears rosary. Besides, he wears a girdle, a sacred thread, armlets and *Jaṭāmukūṣas*. A standing small figure, probably, of a Ṛṣi, is shown on his left side.

Brahmā

8th Century A.D.,

Cave No. 29,

Ellora,

Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XXI. Gaṅgāikoṇḍācolāpuram :

Gaṅgāikoṇḍācolāpuram is in Tiruchi Distt. (Tamil Nadu). It was made capital of the Cholas by Rajendra I. It was the capital of the Cholas for about 250 years. Now, it is a small village bounded in the west by the Gaṅgāikoṇḍan lake and by the river Vadavaru in the east.

An extremely beautiful image of Brahmā is installed here. It has four faces and four arms. The hands are with usual emblems. Brahmā as such wears a *Dhotī*, a necklace, wristlets, armlets, etc. A high Jaṭāmukūṣa embellishes his all heads at a time. His two consorts are to his right and left. He is in standing pose and so are his consorts. They, too, are of attractive beauty.

Brahmā

with his consorts,

Chola, 11th-12th Century A.D.,

Gaṅgāikoṇḍācolāpuram,

Tamil Nadu.

Plate XXII. Gwalior Museum :

At Gwalior, there is an Archaeological Museum, which has a fine collection of sculptures, which covers a period from the third Century B.C. to the seventh Century A.D. Besides, it has many other specimens of Indian Art, painting of the Rajput and the Mughal period.

Brahmā.
Gwalior Museum,
Gwalior,
Madhya Pradesh.

The Gwalior Museum has got another very beautiful image of Brahmā. The special feature of this image is that the image's four hands are half-cut. Brahmā is in standing posture and he has four heads with a high *Jaṭāmukūṣa*. He stands on a simple seat with his vehicle in front of it. As a whole, the image bears an impressive look.

At Hampi, there is a temple, which is dedicated to Śiva. The Lingel from the Śiva Temple shows the Trinity-formed of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. At present, unfortunately, the image of Brahmā, which was standing at extreme right of the panel of the gods, is damaged in its entirety, hence no details.

XXV Helebid :
At Helebid, the Hoyśalas made many temples. Of these, the Hoyśaleśvara Temple is the foremost. The Hoyśalas made many other temples at Belur and Somanathpur. The Hoyśaleśvara Temple was built in 1150 A.D.

In the Hoysalesvara Temple, there is an image of Brahmā
 CC-0. Prof. Bhatia Varanasi Collection, New Delhi. Digitized by e33 Foundational

is bedecked with ornaments of value. Brahmā is four-faced with beards and *Jaiāmukūṭas*.

Brahmā

Hoyśala, 12th Century A.D.,
Hoyśaleśvara Temple, Helebid,
Karnataka.

Plate XXVI. Helebid :

In the Horśaleśvara Temple, at Helebid, there are two beautiful images of Brahmā and Viṣṇu side by side. Brahmā is four-faced and four-armed. The image is fully ornamented and is in standing posture. This image has been regarded as one of the master-pieces of Hoyśala art.

Brahmā

Hoyśala, 12th Century A.D.,
Horśaleśvara Temple, Helebid,
Karnataka.

Plate XXVII. Indian Museum :

The Indian Museum, Calcutta was established in 1814. Its Archaeological Section has the finest archaeological collection in India. It is rich in sculptural collection of various period from the third Century B.C. to the late medieval period.

An image of Brahmā is a priceless piece of art in the Museum. It is from Bongra in Bengal. Its height is 29". This, too, is included in the beautiful images of the god. The image is in sitting posture. Its one hand is damaged. A book, a jar and a staff are in the hands of the god. In this pose, Brahmā sits on a lotus-seat with one leg folded and the other kept on the base of the lotus. Brahmā wears a high *Jaiāmukuta* on one head and usual ornaments.

Brahmā

Bongra, Bengal,
Indian Museum,
Calcutta.

Plate XXVIII. Kerala Museum :

A wooden bracket figure of Brahmā is kept in the State Museum, Kera'a. It is a small sitting figure of Brahmā. A glance at the figure makes us believe that the god, in this pose,

is in meditation. The four faces are quite marked and seem to be of the equal size and shape. He wears similar *Jatā-mukūṭas*. The back hands have a rosary and a jar and frontal hands meet each other. A figure stands to the left of the god. Brahmā as such wears usual ornaments. The figure is highly decorated and bears an impressive look.

Brahmā

State Museum,
Tiruvanam,
Kerala.

Plate XXIX. *Khajuraho* :

At Khajuraho, there is a Devī Jagadambā Temple, which is to the north of the Mahadeva Temple. It is thought that at the beginning, this temple was dedicated to Viṣṇu and later to goddess Kālī. Some take the image of goddess Kālī to be the image of Makaravāhini Gaṅgā. The Devī Jagadambā is in the *Pañcayatana* style.

A standing couple is found to the south of the Devī Temple. It is Brahmā with his consort. The god wears a *Jaṭāmukūṭa*, a garland, anklets and a 'sacred' thread. His hands are not distinct. He is seen in a passionate mood with his consort wishing an embracing. His vehicle, the goose is to the left of the god.

Brahmā

Chandela, 950-1050 A.D.,
South of the Devī Temple,
Khajuraho, Chhattarpur Distt.,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXX. *Khajuraho* :

The Khajuraho Temples are famous all over the world. There were a group of temples, 85 in number, of which only 25 are in existence now. They are found in Chhattarpur Distt. (M.P.) and were built by the Chandela Kings between 950-1050 A.D. The *Causaṭha Yoginī* Temple is one of them. It is believed that an image of Kālī, was installed here by 64 *Yoginis*. Oblong is the shape of the temple, which is in the south-west of the Shivasagara Lake. This is the only granite temple at Khajuraho.

An image of Brahmā is found near the *Causaṭha Yoginī* Temple. It is half-bodied figure in standing posture. It is one-faced image, which has four hands. The frontal hands are half depicted and the opposite have a book and, probably, a staff. The god has round face with beard (partly broken). He wears earrings, the *Yajñopavīta*, armlets and a beautiful *Jaṭāmukuṭa*. It appears as if it is a living deity.

Brahmā

Chandela King, 950-1050 Century A.D.,
Khajuraho, Chhattarpur Distt.,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXXI. Lucknow Museum :

Lucknow Museum was built in 1863. The Museum has a variety of images of various places of Uttar Pradesh. They bear the imprints of Brāhmanical, Jain and Buddhist images. Besides, it has got rich numismatic collection of Gupta and Mughal period in addition to paintings and manuscripts.

The images of Lucknow Museum include an image of Brahmā from *Vatakeśvara*. It is one of the beautiful images of Brahmā. It has got many singularities. Brahmā is in sitting pose and has three faces with *Jaṭāmukuṭas*. He bears a beard. A rosary, a jar, and a book are in the respective three hands of the god. Several other images are also shown around the god. He wears usual ornaments. His feet rest on a foot-seat, the bottom portion of which is embellished with two roses.

Brahmā

Lucknow Museum,
Lucknow, U.P.

Plate XXXII. Mahadan, Mathura :

An image of Brahmā and Sarasvatī, Gahadawala, 12th Century A.D. Mahadan, Mathura, U.P., is kept in the National Museum, New Delhi. Here, Sarasvatī is shown as the wife of Brahmā, who has kept her in his lap.

Brahmā

with Sarasvatī,
Gahadawala, 12th Century A.D.,
National Museum,

Plate XXXIII. Nagpur Museum :

An extremely beautiful image of Brahmā is preserved in Nagpur Museum. It is a master-piece of the 12th Century A.D. from Bhandak Distt., Canda. Brahmā, in this form, is in standing pose. He is four-handed. One hand is damaged. The rest three have a rosary, a *Kamaṇḍalu* and a *staff*. The god is four-faced and wears a *Jaṭāmukuta*. He has a long beard. Besides, he wears a necklace, waistlet, armlets, wristlets, anklets, etc. On top and bottom, some images are shown as adoring the god.

Brahmā

12th Century A.D.,

Nagpur Museum,

Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XXXIV. National Museum :

An image of Brahmā of the Chola period is kept in the National Museum, New Delhi. It is a simple image and has four faces and four hands. It is in sitting posture on high *Āsana*. The frontal hands are in the *Abhaya* and the *Varada* poses. The god wears a sacred thread, anklets, armlets and wristlets. This image belongs to the Early Chola period (10th Century A.D.).

Brahmā

Early Chola. 10th Century A.D.,

Tamil Nadu.

Plate XXXV. Nepal :

Like many Indian Museums, the Kathmandu Museum is in possession of a rare image of Brahmā. The image should be taken rare in the sense that it is one of the beautiful images of the god. It is profusely ornamented. The god is in standing posture and has four hands and four faces. The objects in the hands are not distinct. The *Jaṭāmukuta*, armlets, earrings, a waistlet, wristlets, anklets, etc., enhance the beauty of the image. Some *Ṛṣis* are shown as worshipping the god. Brahmā stands on a double lotus-seat and so are standing two other female deities to the right and left of Brahmā. His vehicle is shown at the bottom. The great

god is standing with eyes closed in meditation. The image is made of stone and its height is 30".

Brahmā

Pāla, 10th Century A.D.,
Kathmandu Museum,
Nepal.

Plate XXXVI. Nepal :

The Gokarna Mahadeva Temple is in Nepal. As the name suggests, it is dedicated to Mahadeva. However, it is possessed of a beautiful image of Brahmā, who is in standing pose. He is four-faced and four-armed. This figure is of a singular type in the sense that standing Brahmā keeps one foot on a lotus-seat and the other on his vehicle—the swan, which is to his right. He wears a fairly large garland. The four hands have distinct objects—a rosary, a water-vessel, a book and a trident. He wears a *Dhotī*, earrings, wristlets and a *Juṭā-mukuṭa*.

Brahmā

Gokarna,
18th Century A.D.,
Nepal.

Plate XXXVII. Raipur Museum :

The Raipur Museum, M.P., contains a sitting image which is likened by iconographers to Brahmā or Vasiṣṭha. The image is shown sitting in the *Yogāṣana* pose. It has a long beard and four hands. A trident, a book and a jar are found in three hands. The palm of the fourth hand is raised as if the god is giving *Āśiṣa* (blessing). He wears a *Yajñopavīta* (the sacred thread) and no other ornaments are on his body. He is deeply absorbed in meditation.

Brahmā or Vasiṣṭha

Raipur Museum,
(M.P.)

Plate XXXVIII. Tanjore Art Gallery :

Tanjore was the royal city of the Cholas, the Nayakas and the Mahrattas. Tanjore is on the main line of the South Indian Railway and 218 miles south of Madras. "The Rajarajesvara,

now called *airavatesvara* at Darasuram, built by Chola Rajaraja II (1146-1173), and the *Kampahesvara* at Tribhuvan, built by Chola Kulotunga III (1178-1223) (both in Thanjavur Distt.) are the last great temples of the later Cholas."

In the Art Gallery at Tanjore, there are many sculptures of the Chola period. *Brahmā's* is one of them. It is an extremely beautiful image in sitting posture. The image is four-faced. The image shows *Brahmā* in his mid-age. In one of his left hands, he has a rosary and the other is in the *Varada Mudrā*. The things in the right hands are indistinct. As a whole, the god is bedecked with ornaments—*Jaṭāmukūṭas*, earrings, necklace, armlets, wristlets, anklets, etc. He has a slender body, hence a pleasing look. The god has a high double lotus-seat.

Brahmā

Chola, 11th-12th Century A.D.,

Tanjore,

Tamil Nadu.

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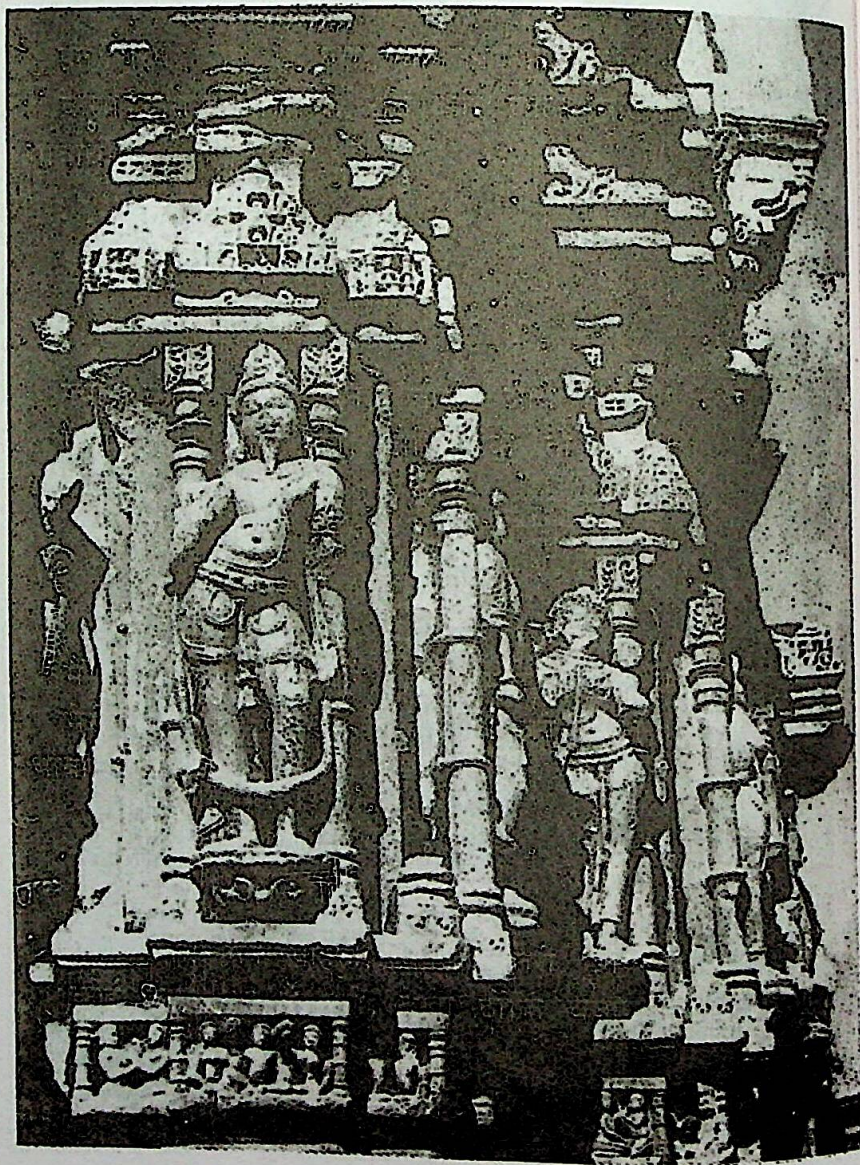
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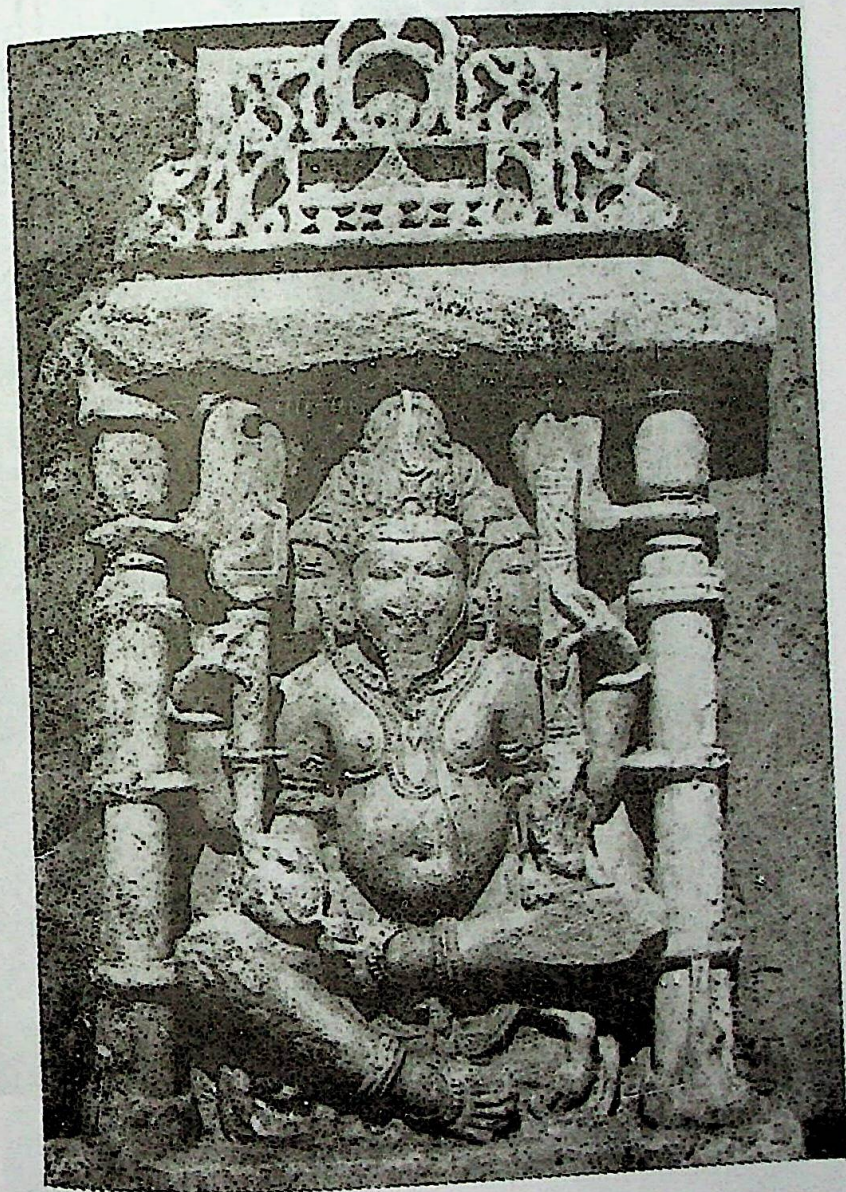


Brahmā, Quite late of the 9th Century A.D., Abaneri, Jaipur Distt., Rajasthan.

Plate II :

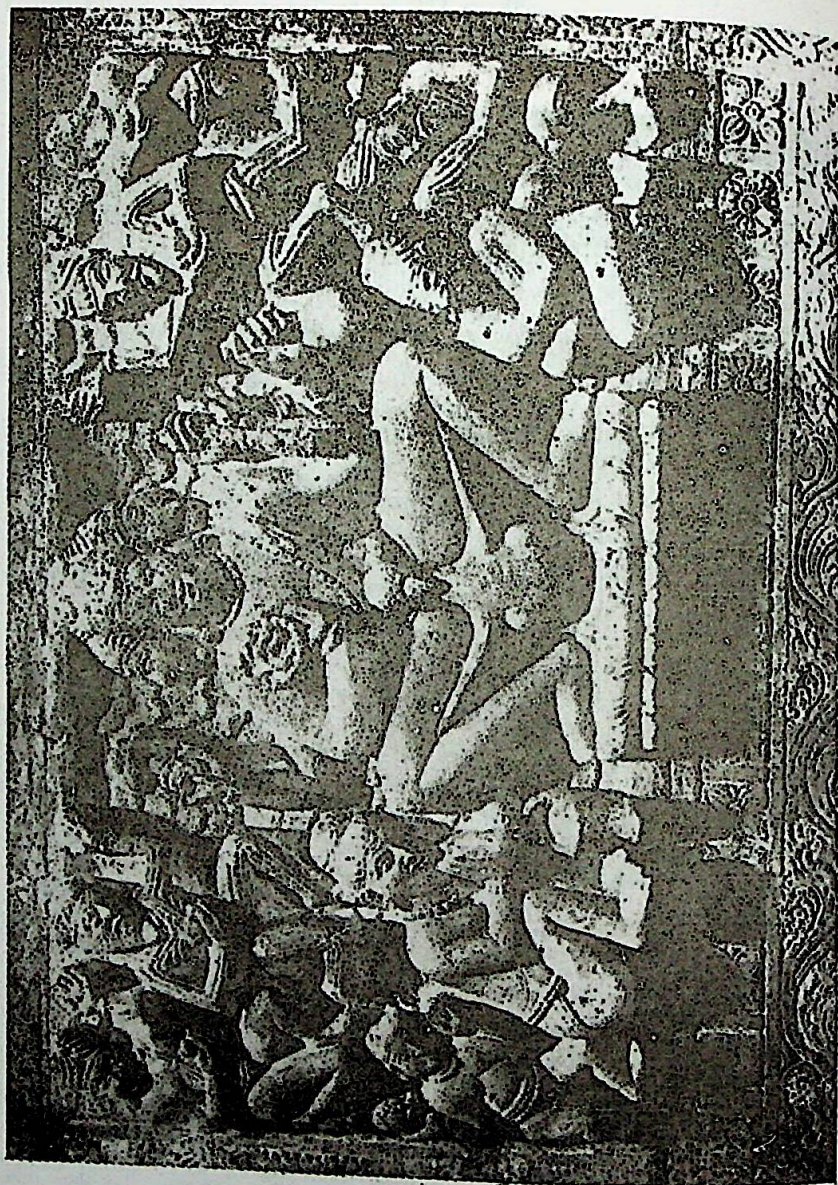


Brahmā
The Meera Temp'le,
Aher, Rajasthan.



Brahmā
The Mewar dynasty.
Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Plate IV :



Brahmā, Chalukyan, 6th-7th Century A.D., Ahole, Bhamur District, Karnataka.

Plate V :

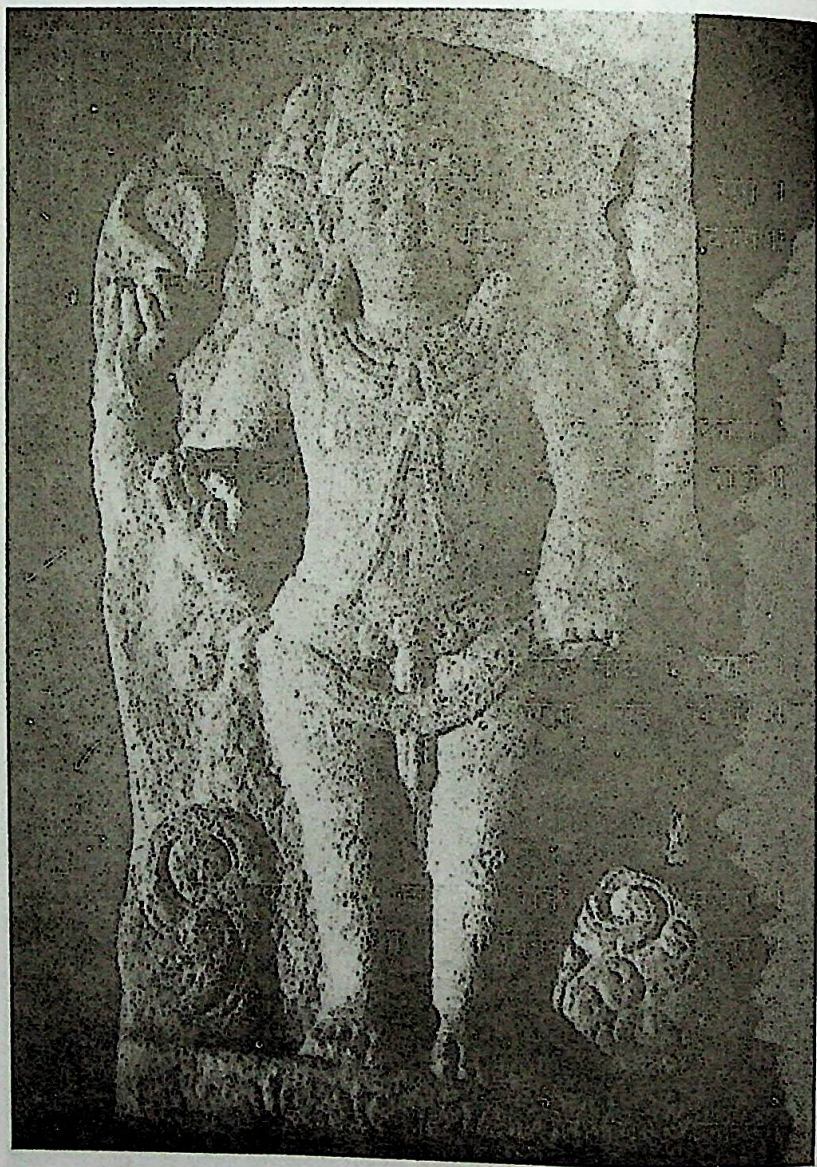


Brahmā

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**Chalukyan, 6th-7th Century A.D.
Aihole, Bijapur Distt., Karnataka.**

Plate VI:



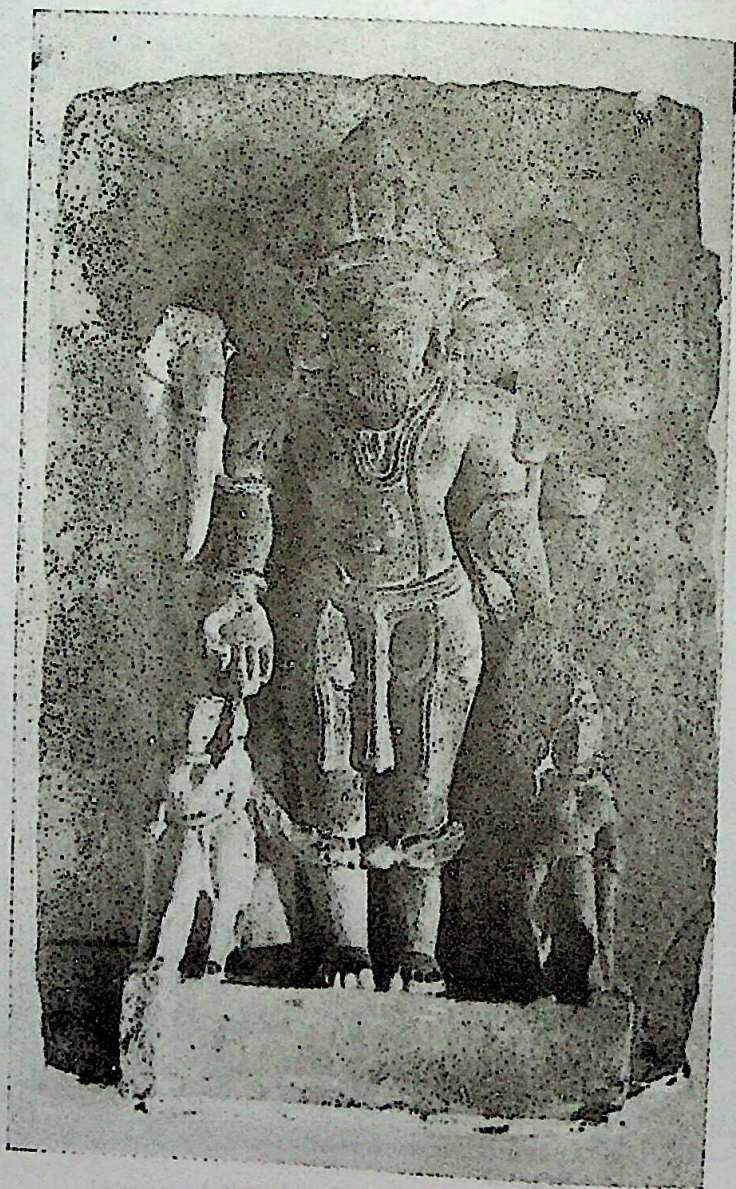
Brahmā
6th-8th Century A.D.,
Alampur Museum,
Distt. Mahboobnagar,
A.P.

Plate VII :



Brahmā
6th-8th Century A.D., (Appox.)
Alampur,
Distt. Mahboobnagar,

Plate VIII :



Brahmā
Allahabad Museum,
Allahabad, U.P. (India)

Plate IX :

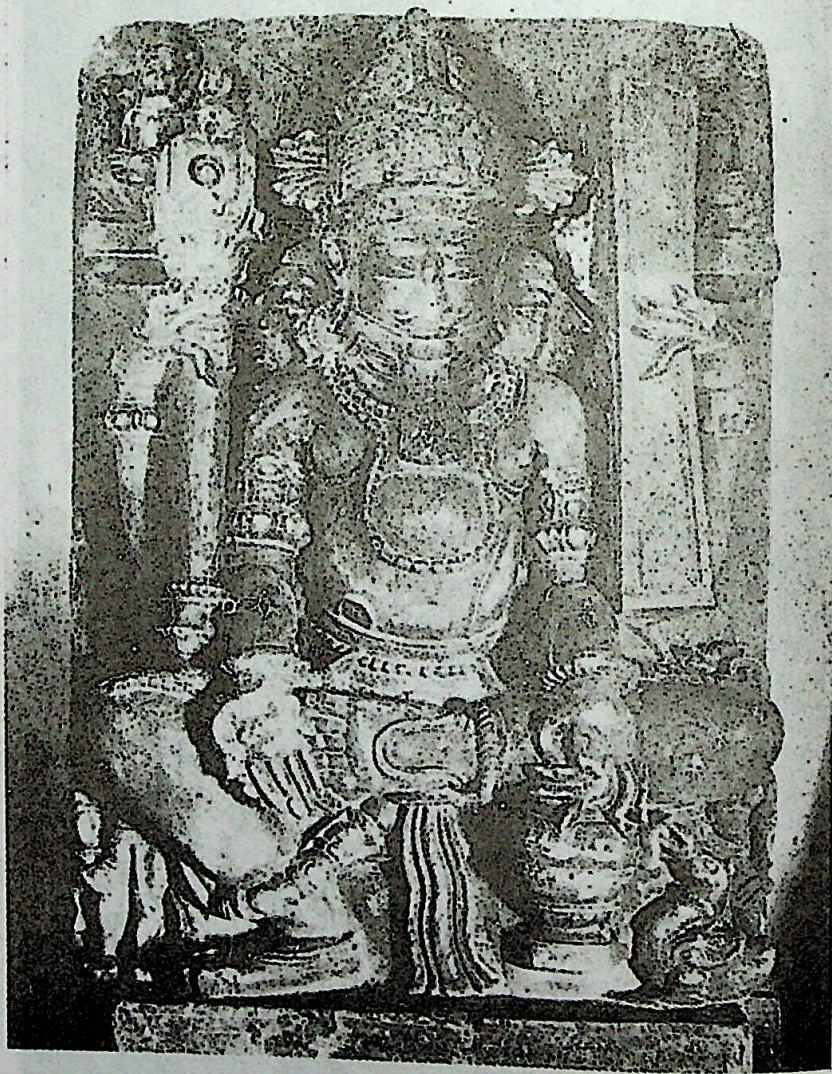


Brahmā

Garhwa Fort,

Allahabad, U.P., (India)

Plate X :



Brahmā
(Probably) 8th Century A.D.,
Bairnath, Almora,
U.P.

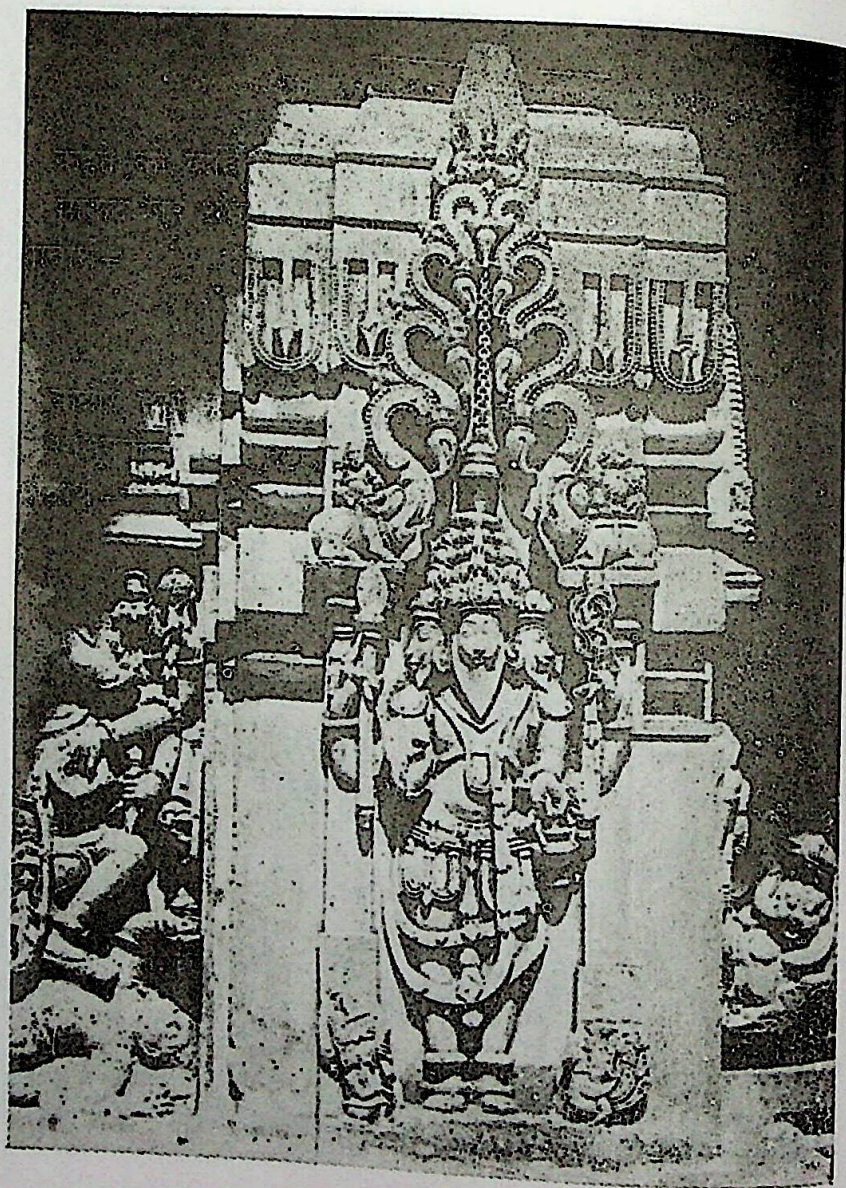
Plate XI :



Brahmā
Medieval Period.

Amber Museum.
Rajasthan.

Plate XII :



Brahmā
The Chenna-Kesāva Temple,
11th-12th Century A.D.,
Belur, Tamil Nadu.

Plate XIII :



Brahmā
8th Century A.D.,
Bhubaneśvara Museum,
Orissa.

Plate XIV :



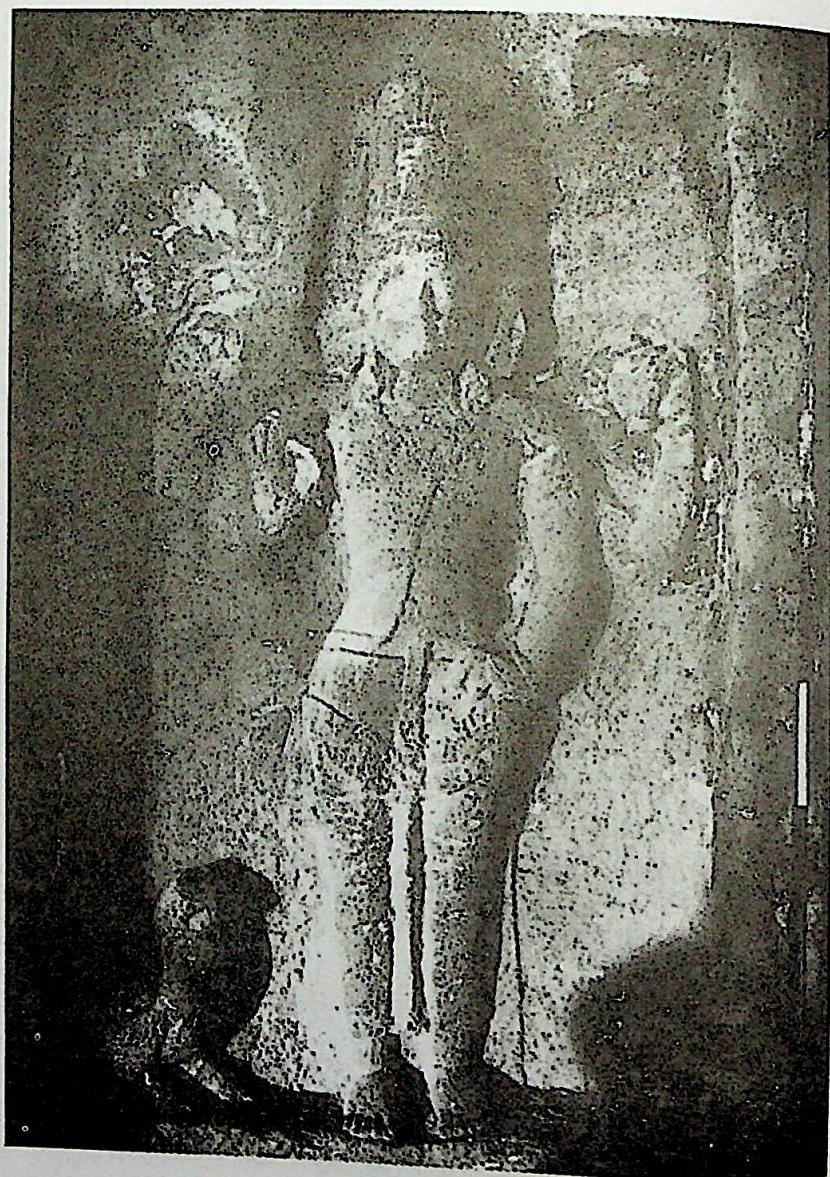
Brahmā
Chola, 13th Century A.D.,
Dārāsūram,
Thanjavur Distt.,
Tamil Nadu.

Plate XV :



Brahmā
Cave No. 16,
Central Shrine,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XVI :



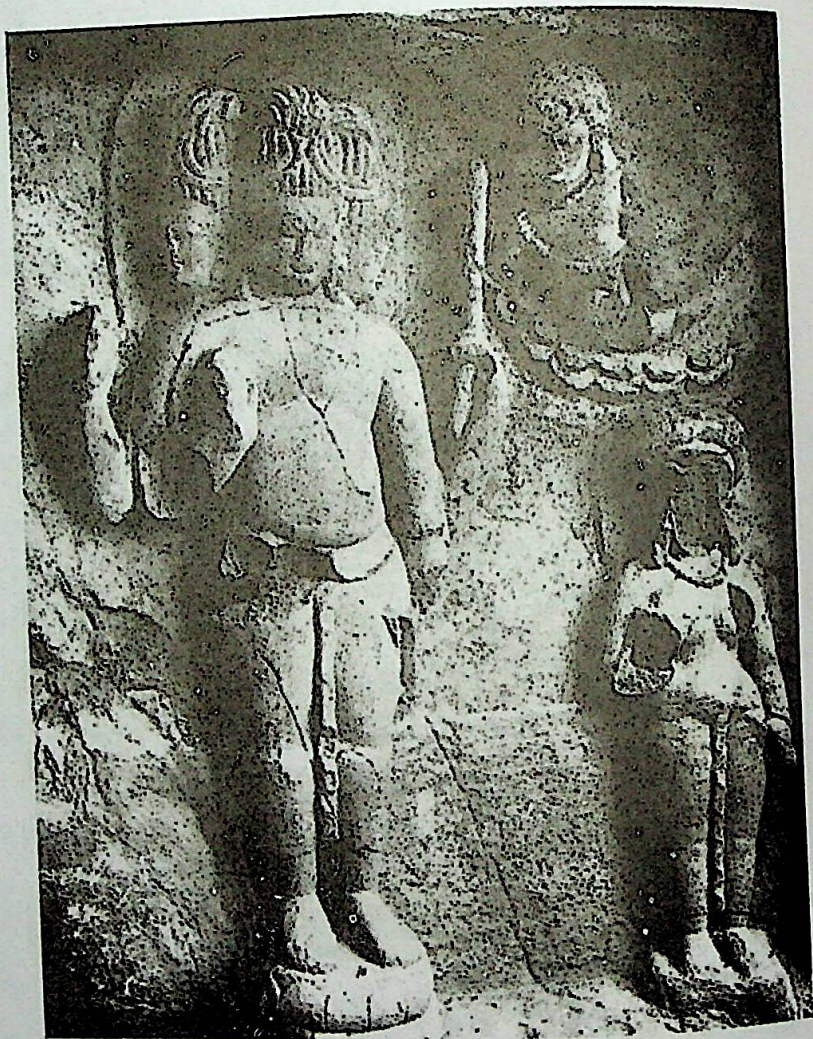
Brahmā
Cave No. 16.
E. Carr'id or,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XVII :



**Brahmā
Cave No. 16,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.**

Plate XVIII :



**Brahmā
Cave No. 16,
Ellora,
Mahārāṣṭra.**



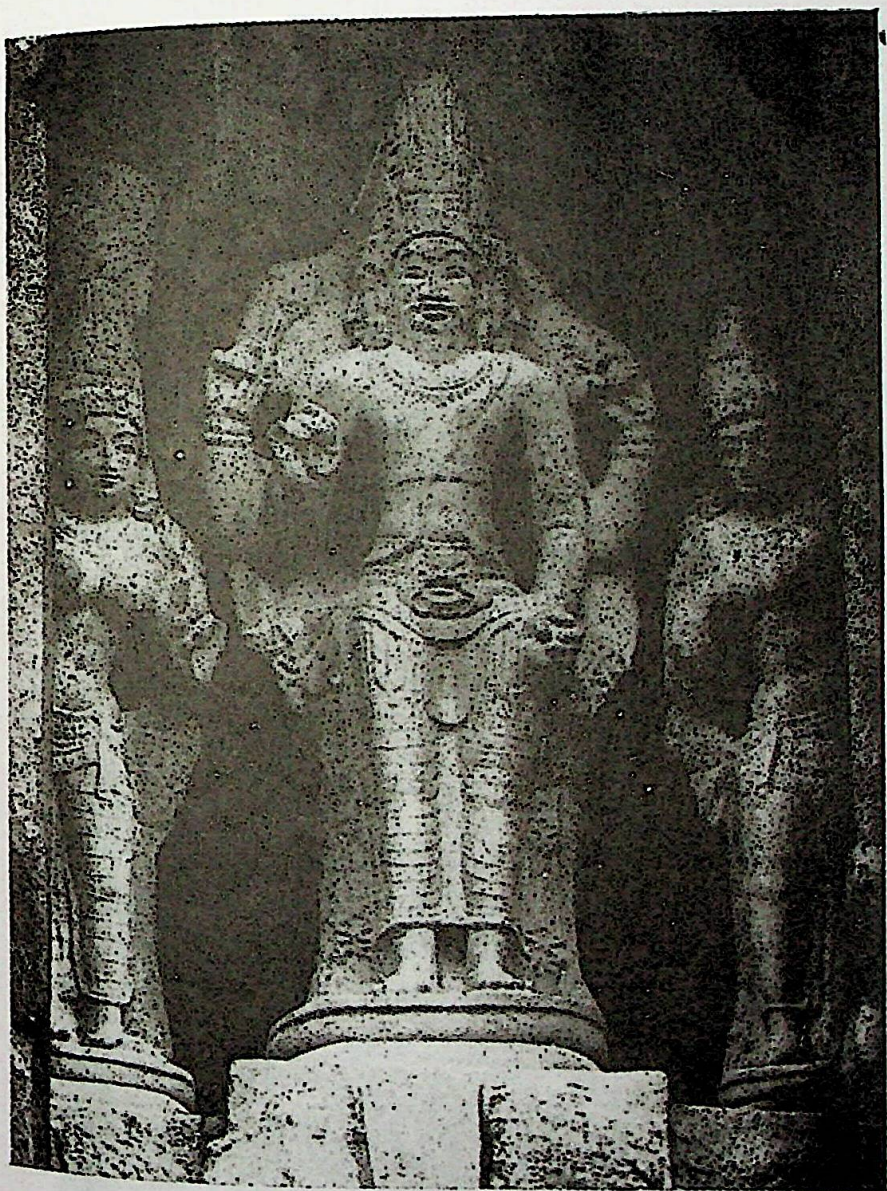
Brahmā along with Viṣṇu and Śiva, Cave No. 27, Ellora, Mahārāṣṭra.

Plate XX :



**Brahmā
Cave No. 29,
8th Century A.D.,
Mahārāstra**

Plate XXI :



Brahmā

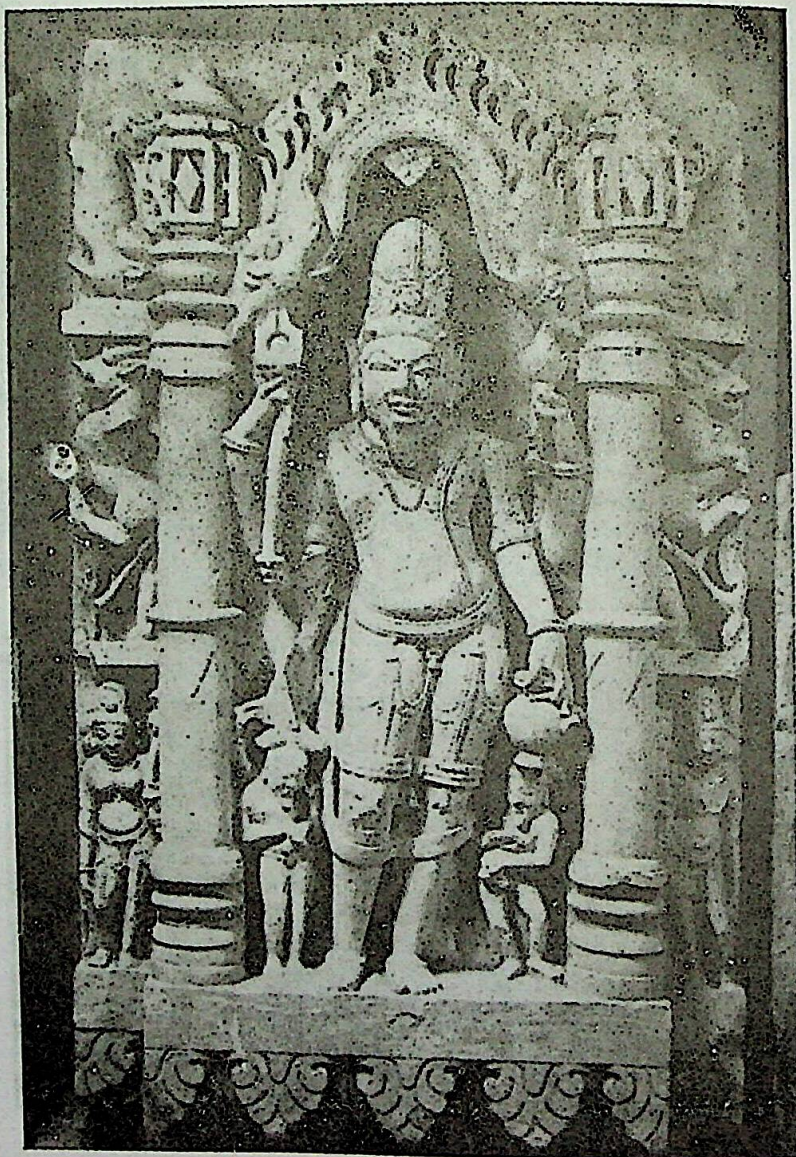
With his consorts,

Chola, 11th-12th Century A.D.,

Gaṅgāikondācolāpuram,

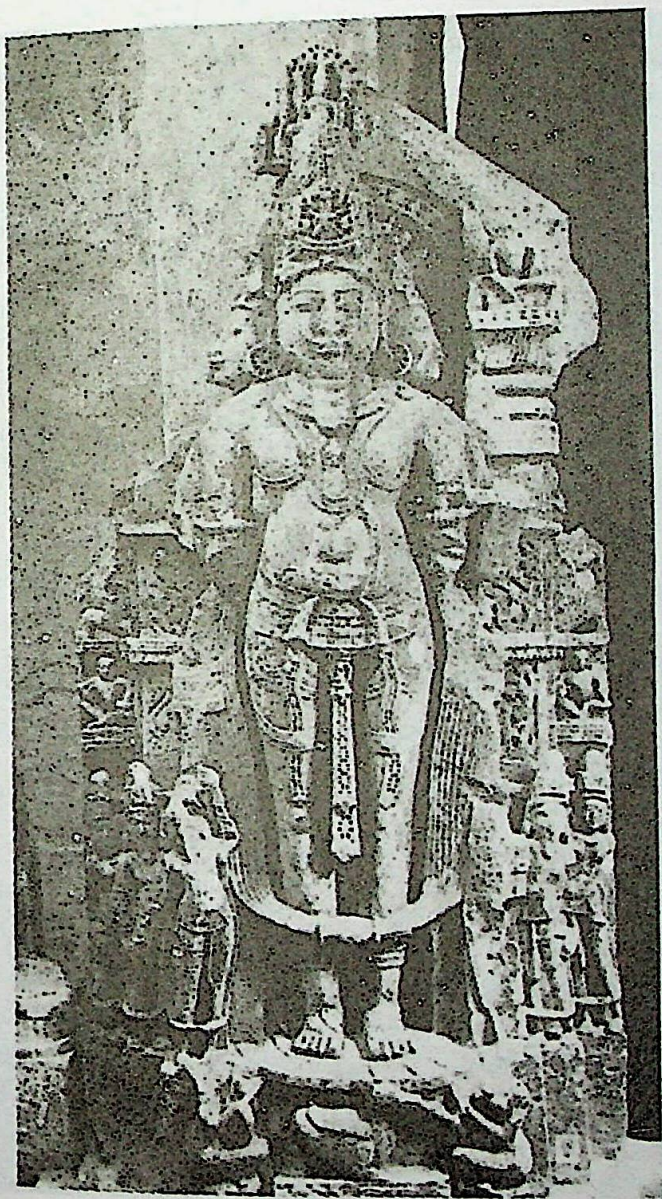
Tamil Nadu.

Plate XXII :



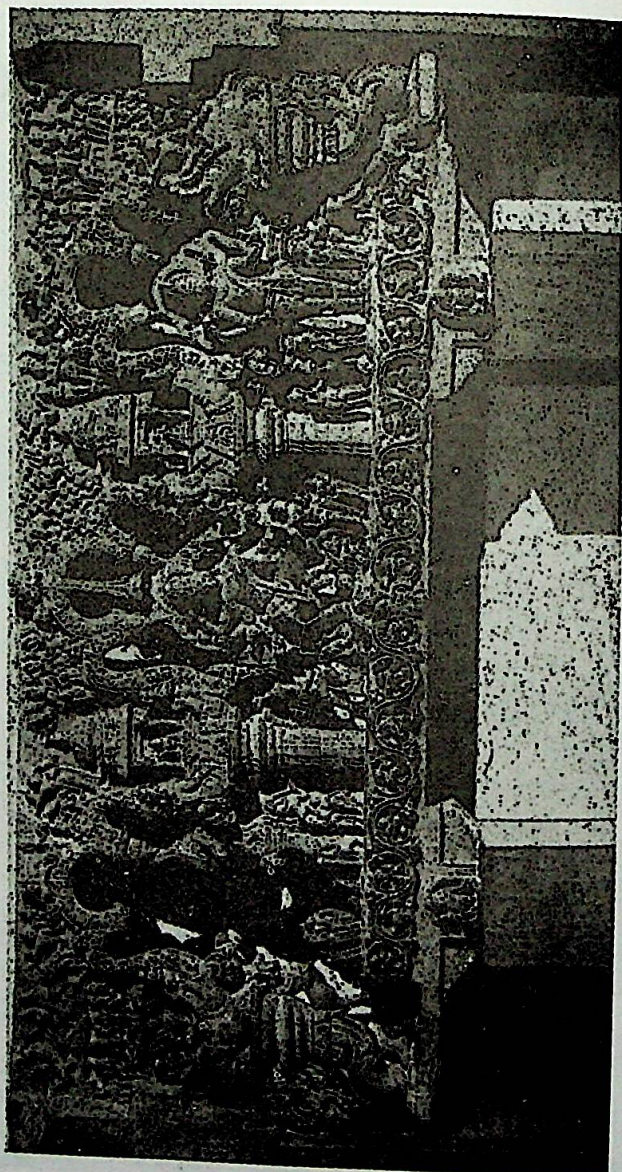
Brahmā
Gwalior Museum,
Gwalior,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXIII :



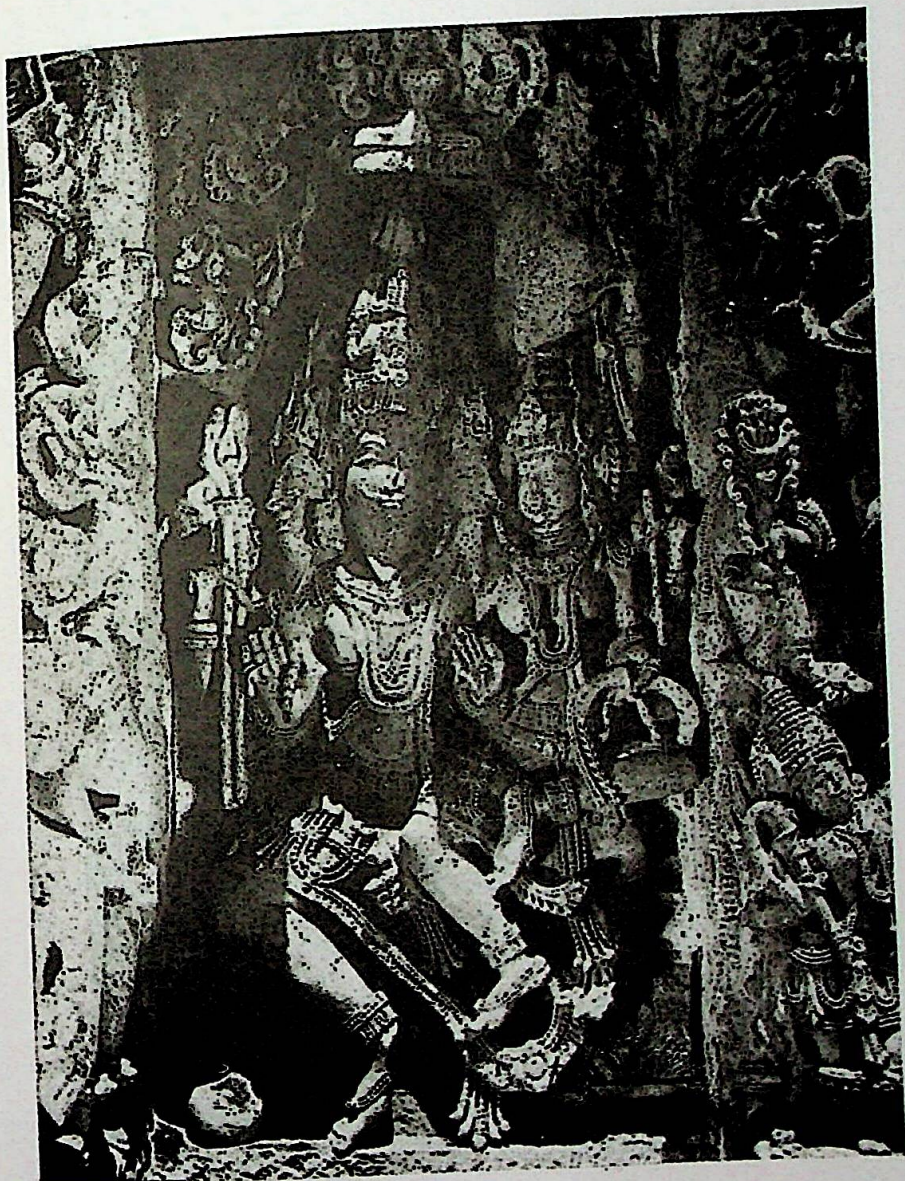
Brahmā
Gwalior Museum,
Gwalior,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXIV :



Brahmā with Viṣṇu and Śiva, Western Chalukya, 12th Century A.D., Hampi, Vijayanagar, Karnataka.

Plate XXV : .



**Brahmā
Hayṣala, 12th Century A.D.,
Hayṣaleśvara Temple, Helebid,
Karnataka.**

Plate XXVI :



Brahmā

Hayṣala, 12th Century A.D.,

Hoysaleswara Temple, Halebidu,

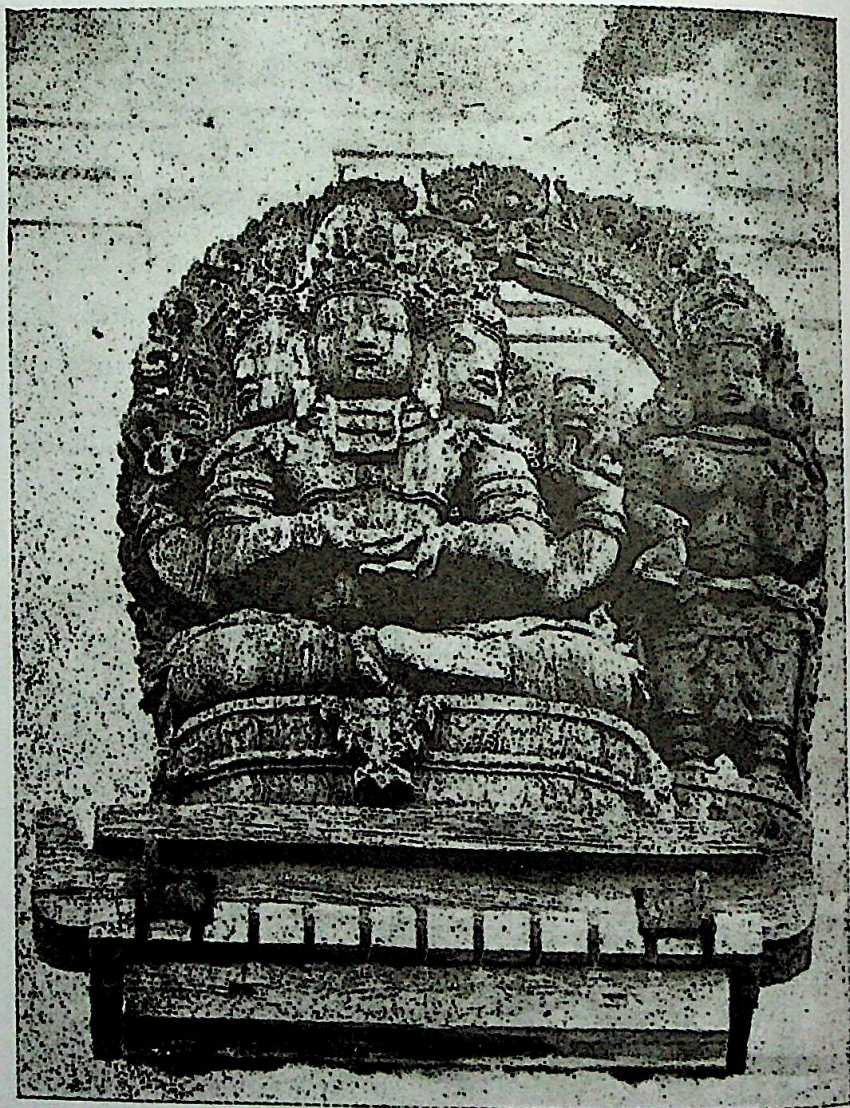
Karnataka.

Plate XXVII :



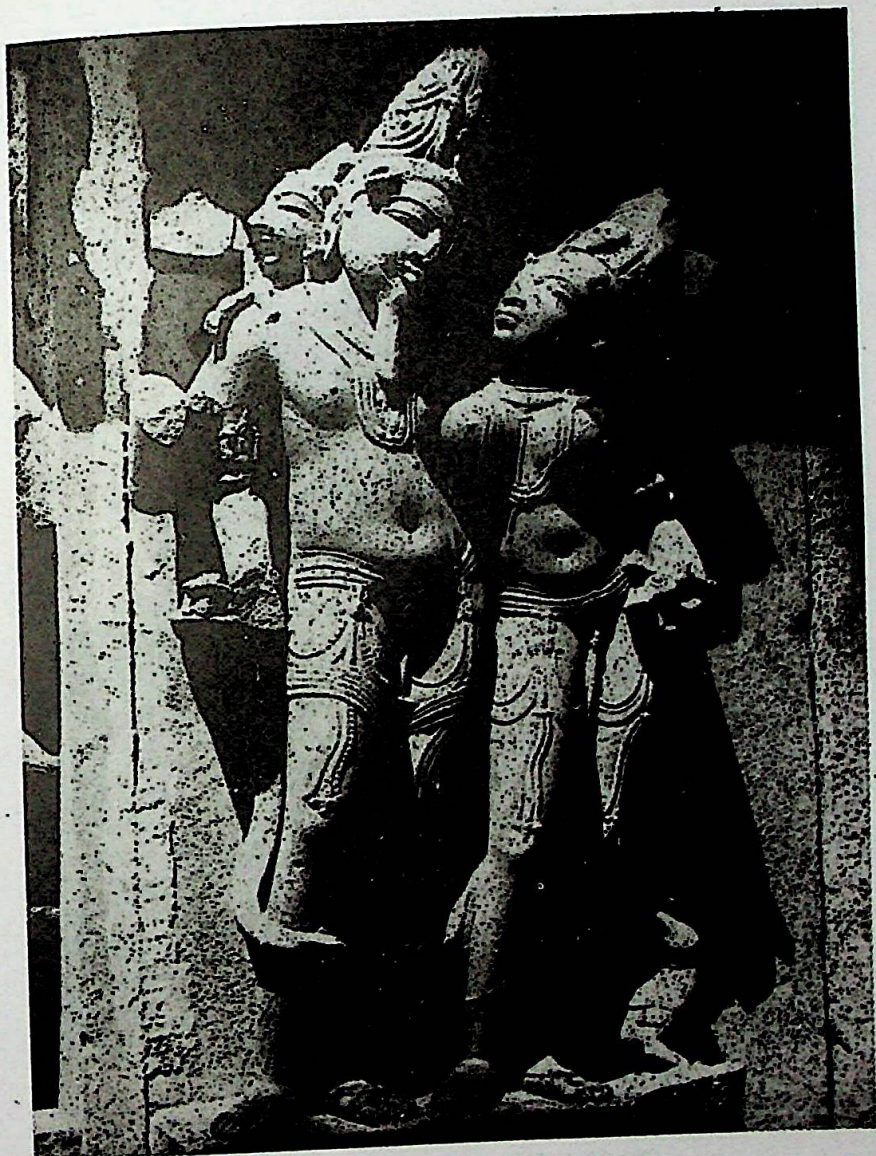
Brahmā
Bongra, Bengal.
Indian Museum.
Calcutta.

Plate XXVIII :



**Brahmā
Kerala State Museum,
Tiruvanam,
Kerala.**

Plate XXIX :



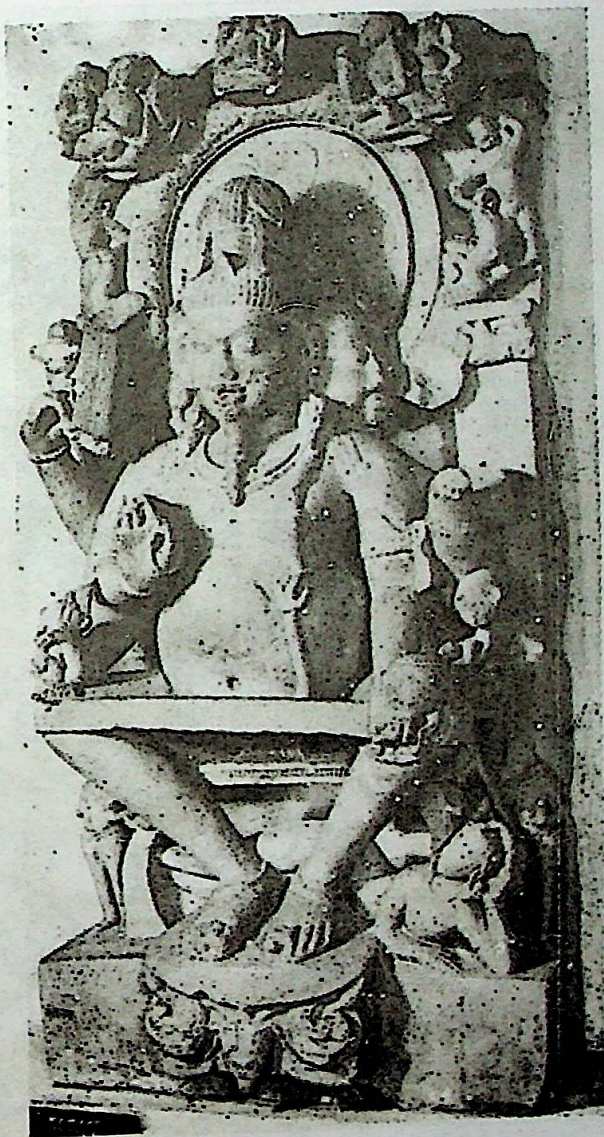
Brahmā
Chandela King, 950-1050 Century A.D.,
South of the Devi Temple,
Khajuraho, Chhattaipur Distt.,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXX :



Brahmā
Chandela King, 950-1050 Century A.D.,
Khajuraho, Chhattarpur Distt.,
Madhya Pradesh.

Plate XXXI :



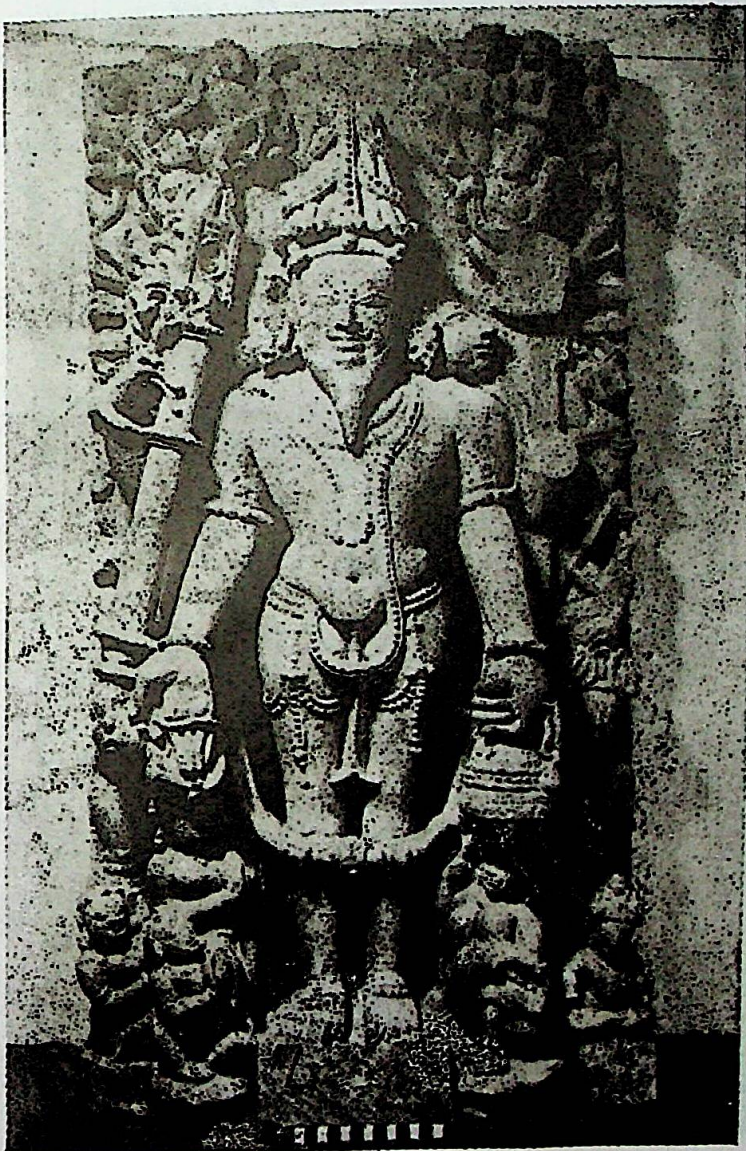
Brahmā
Lucknow Museum,
Lucknow, U.P.

Plate XXXII :



**Brahmā
With Sarasvatī,
Gahadawala, 12th Century A.D.,
National Museum,
New Delhi.**

Plate XXXIII :



Brahmā
12th Century A.D.,
Nagpur Museum,
Mahārāstra.

Plate XXXIV :



Brahmā

Early Chola, 10th Century A.D.,

Tamil Nadu.

Plate XXXV :



**Brahmā
Pāla, 10th Century A.D.,
Kathmandu Museum,
Nepal.**

Plate XXXVI :



**Brahmā
Gokarna,
18th Century A.D.,
Nepal.**

Plate XXXVII :



**Brahmā or Vasiṣṭha
Raipur Museum,
Madhya Pradesh.**

Plate XXXVIII :



**Brahmā
Chola, 11th Century A.D.,
Tanjore,
Tamil Nadu.**

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About the Book

Brahmā is one of the most important deities of the Purāṇas. In the Vedic literature, he is not mentioned; but later on, he emerged as a foremost god. Generally, savants have been indolent towards him as they desisted from writing on him. The present work aims at to fill up the gap. The work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter highlights the importance of Brahmā and the place occupied by him in the Purāṇas. In the other following chapters, many obscure aspects of the personality of Brahmā have been put forth with full explanation. Symbol plays a major role in the Hinduism. An attempt has been made from the place, to explain various symbols that are related to Brahmā in many forms and varieties. An innocent reader, knows Brahmā under a few names; but this book presents a list of names, which suggest some deep meanings. Behind the god has behind them. Besides this the book contains 38 plates of the god's images, which are best selected from the various schools of India. Thus, the book is important for the department of Sanskrit, culture, religion, history, drama, museum, archaeology, etc.



About the Author

Name of the Author : Professor Mohammad Israil Khan

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Education : U.P. Board and Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.

Teaching Experience : First of all, he taught as Lecture in A.M.U. Aligarh as temporary lecturer. Later on, he joined M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad (Meerut University) as permanent Lecturer and in 1983, he joined as Reader the Delhi University's Sanskrit Department and became Professor in the same department in 1993.

Educational Qualifications : He is M.A. (first in first) in Sanskrit, Ph.D., D.Litt. and Diploma holder in German.

Awards and Honours : Till date, he has received 11 awards and honours and celebrated in them, is the certificate of honour by the President of India, which is for life-long.

Research Experience : He has produced 56 Ph.D. and M.Phil. scholars under his supervision.

Attendance to National and International Conferences : Ten times, he went abroad to attend the World Sanskrit Conference and the conference for Asian and North African Studies and visited America, Canada, France, Germany, Holland, Hong Kong, Australia, Vienna, Hungary, Rome, U.K., Italy, etc.

Service to Animal : He is very kind hearted man. He loves animals and birds and helps them in their period of distress and difficulty. In this field, his services are no doubt singular.

Singular service to the Nation : In 1984, he showed his courage in avoiding a riot in Ghaziabad. He saved himself and the city and saw to it that riot did not happen in Ghaziabad. His roles can't be described in a few words.

Association with Educational bodies : He is Associate number of educational bodies of India and Foreign countries : patron, life-member, vice-president, etc.